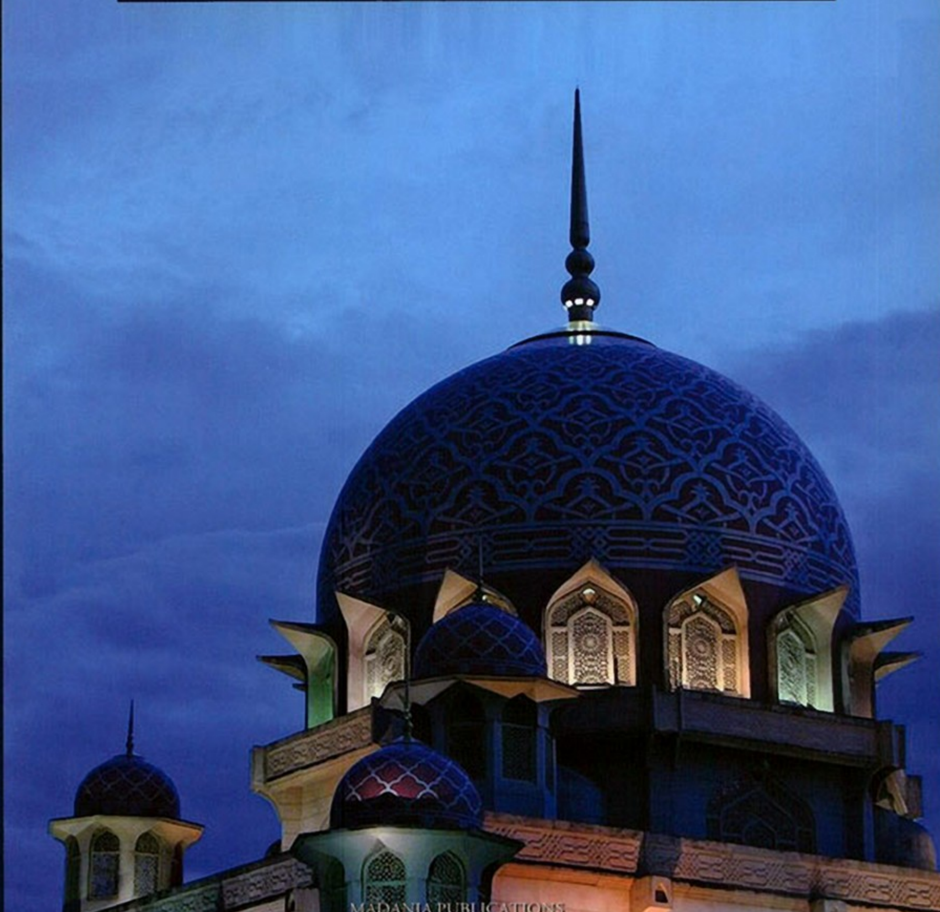
The Ramadan of

SHAIKH AL-ḤADĪTH

MUḤAMMAD ZAKARIYYĀ

and our Elders

DR. MOHAMMAD ISMAIL MEMON MADANI



MADANIA PUBLICATIONS

THE RAMADAN OF SHAIKH AL-ḤADĪTH MUḤAMMAD ZAKARIYYĀ

In the name of Allah; the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah; Lord of all the worlds; and peace and blessings be upon the most Honorable of Messengers, Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions, and all those who follow them in righteousness, until the Day of Judgement.

Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds…

THE RAMADAN *of* SHAIKH AL-ḤADĪTH MUḤAMMAD ZAKARIYYĀ

Dr. Ismail Memon

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي انزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْانُ هُدًي لِلنَّاسِ وَ بَيِّنَاتِ مِنَ الْهُدَي وَ الْفُرْقَان

The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Qur'an was revealed as guidance for mankind and with vivid features of (earlier) guidance and the Criterion (of right and wrong)…

2:185

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My main inspiration for the translation of this work was my shaikh, Dr. Ismael Memon. May Allah سبحانه وتعالى bless him with a long life. And then, my father, Dr. Niaz Aḥmad, who has done everything for me and more. This book would not be in your hands without his dedication to raising his son piously. I also would like to thank Tamer Osman and Meekail Smith for reading through the translation and offering beneficial advice on ways to make it better. May Allah سبحانه وتعالى accept them and the countless others who helped throughout the different stages in the completion of this book, in this world and in the next.

Transliteration Table

ء (إ أ)	‘ (the *hamza* is produced by a sudden stop in the airstream similar to the sound in the middle of the exclamation, *uh-oh*.)
ا	*a, ā*
ب	*b*
ت	*t*
ث	*th* (is pronounced like the *th* in *thick* and *thumb*)
ج	*j*
ح	*ḥ* (a heavy *h* sound produced in the center of the throat)
خ	kh (a guttural *k* sound produced in the upper throat and sounding similar to the *ch* in German as in *Bach*.)
د	*d*
ذ	*dh* (is pronounced like the *th* in *though* and *thus*)
ر	*r*
ز	*z*
س	*s*
ش	*sh*
ص	*ṣ* (an emphatic *s*)
ض	*ḍ* (an emphatic *d*)
ط	*ṭ* (an emphatic *t*)
ظ	*ẓ* (an emphatic *dh*)
ع	*‘, ‘a, ‘i, ‘u* (produced in the center of the throat)
غ	*gh* (a guttural *g* sound produced in the upper throat)
ف	*f*
ق	*q* (a heavy *k* sound)
ك	*k*
ل	*l*
م	*m*
ن	*n*
و	*w*
ه	*h*
ي	*y, ī, i*
ں	ń [from Urdu] a nasalized sound usually affixed to end of a word.
ؓ	*Raḍiya Allahu ‘anhā* – may Allah ﷾ be pleased with her (used following mention of a female companion of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ)
ؓ	*Raḍiya Allahu ‘anhu* – may Allah ﷾ be pleased with him (used following mention of a male companion of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ)
ؓ	*Raḍiya Allahu ‘anhum* – may Allah ﷾ be pleased with them (used following mention a group of companions of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ)
ﷺ	*Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa Sallam* – may the peace and blessings be upon him (used following mention of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ)
﷾	*Subhanahu wa t‘ala* – Be He glorious and Exalted (used following mention of Allah ﷾)
ؑ	*‘alaihi al-Salām* - may peace be upon him (used following mention of prophets)

Haḍrat Shaikh's Ramaḍān

1916
This year was not spent with Shaikh Sahāranpūrī. Also, Maulānā Yaḥyā passed away in this year.

1920
The year Ḥaḍrat Shaikh began staying awake the nights of Ramadan.

1926–27
In Ḥaramain. Also, Shaikh Sahāranpūrī passed away in 1927.

1928–1943
In Sahāranpūrī/Raipñr except where specified. Also, Shaikh Thānwī passed away in 1943.

1931
This year was spent in Niẓām al-Dīn.

1944
Ḥaḍrat Shaikh spent this Ramadan in Niẓām al-Dīn upon the request of Maulānā Yūsuf. Also, Maulānā Ilyās passed away in this year.

1945–1964
These years were spent in Sahāranpūr without i'tikāf. The collective i'tikāf to be seen in the last years of Ḥaḍrat Shaikh's life was not yet in practice; only that people came and sat with Ḥaḍrat Shaikh after 'Ishā. Also, Maulānā 'Abd al-Qādir passed away in 1962.

1948
This year was spent in Niẓām al-Dīn.

1965-79
The beginning of collective i'tikāf in Sahāranpūr except where specified.

1973/1978
These two years were spent in Ḥaramain. In 1973, he migrated to Ḥijāz.

1980
Collective i'tikāf in Faisalabad, Pakistan.

1981
Collective i'tikāf in South Africa.

1982
Ḥaḍrat Shaikh passed away on May 24

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The Second Book

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

ALL PRAISE IS to Allah سبحانه وتعالى, the Most gracious, the Most merciful, and may His blessings and salām be upon His honorable and last prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ, his Companions رضي الله عنهم, and the Salaf and Khalaf [earlier and later predecessors] who preserved and relayed the message of Islam to us as they received it from the Companions رضي الله عنهم, who received it from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who received it from Jibrā'īl عليه السلام who received it from the Sustainer of the Worlds.

The intended purpose of this book is to learn how the elders of the past spent and cherished each moment of their Ramadan. Though their whole lives were already dedicated to the work of Dīn (religion), whether through the teaching of hadith, tabligh (propagation of Dīn), teaching in traditional religious schools, or giving talks, all such work came to a halt in the month of Ramadan and they devoted themselves solely to prayers and remembrance of Allah سبحانه وتعالى.

One might ask the question that if their whole lives were already dedicated to the work of Dīn, why did they feel the necessity of setting this aside during the month of Ramadan? After all, devoting time to worship benefits only the worshipper, whereas time spent in the work of Dīn benefits others as well. Would it not then be more beneficial and virtuous to continue the work of Dīn and in fact increase it in Ramadan in order to gain the full blessings of Ramadan? However a look in the hadith reveals that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ devoted his time solely to the worship of Allah during this blessed month. Our elders, by following in his

footsteps, were only reviving this long forgotten Sunna of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

The month of Ramadan is a time to heal the soul from the effects of sins. It is also meant to remove ignorance of Allah ﷻ and love of the material world. If a person does not refresh his īmān in this month and does not strive to eliminate the effects of evil that settle in the heart, then his spiritual condition worsens year after year, until he meets Allah ﷻ in the state in which Allah ﷻ dislikes meeting him, as narrated in the hadith. Such a person's love for the material world and his dislike of Dīn increases to the extent that objections against the Dīn, criticism of the friends of Allah ﷻ and those who represent the Dīn of Allah ﷻ become his way of life. He fails to see his own spiritual deterioration or his own faults. Instead, he becomes mired in the worldly life and only finds solace in wealth and things that stimulate the self [nafs]. These are all effects of ignoring the great blessing of this month and the opportunity that it offers to be returned to a state of good spiritual health.

Every Muslim should perform iʿtikāf the last ten days of Ramadan at least once in a lifetime, if not every year. In iʿtikāf, the withdrawal from the material world and seclusion in the house of Allah ﷻ offers the opportunity for a Muslim with the weakest of īmān and the worst of characters to reconnect with Allah ﷻ and begin life anew. The connection that is built in the month of Ramadan will then help one through the remainder of the year until the next Ramadan. It is like the example of a person crossing the desert. He will survive if he takes with him water, food and other such provisions that are necessary for him to reach his destination. If he does not, he will die before he reaches his destination.

May Allah ﷻ give us all the ability to cherish this blessed month and to gain the true understanding of Dīn as our elders had. It is true that the success of our umma in this world and the Hereafter, is in following our elders, not others. May this book be a source of guidance for how to spend the month of Ramadan and a way to establish a relationship with our elders, who showed us through

their example what it means to love Allah ﷻ, his Blessed Prophet ﷺ and His Dīn.

Going through this book, the reader will encounter new names, foods, people and a vastly different culture from which the elders, whose routines we will be reading in this book, came. It is important for the reader to look past such things and keep their minds focused on the objective of this book, which is to capture the spirit of the Ramadan of our elders and their love for this special month.

'Aṣim Aḥmad
March 28. 2010

FOREWORD

by Shaikh Yūsuf Ludhiānwī

THE MONTH OF Ramadan is the most blessed time of year for the people of *īmān* and a time of spiritual uplifting for the *'ārifīn*[1]. It also held a very special place with our Shaikh, Shaikh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā, whose love for this blessed month manifested itself in a myriad of ways. In his first years, his Ramadan was spent in fulfillment of the aya, "*Devote yourself to Him with [complete] devotion*";[2] thus, he did not tolerate a word with anyone. Over time though, his propensity changed and he became busy in the spiritual rectification of his *murīds* (spiritual students), which eventually became his sole mission in life. In his last years, thousands of murīds were observed sitting in his company, and though some may have turned out like myself, the majority of them, by the grace of Allah ﷻ, met the conditions of the Shaikh and fulfilled his highest expectations.

My great friend, Doctor Ismā'īl Memon, one of the most eminent members of the Shaikh's caravan, compiled this collection of his daily routines [*ma'mūlāt*] throughout the various Ramadan of his life. He hasn't written much himself, but mostly collected and organized the writings of other Shaikhs in an orderly manner. I ask that Allah ﷻ accept his efforts. As I have often heard from others,

1 Those who recognize Allah ﷻ through the eye of the heart.

2 73:8.

the way he spends Ramadan with the murīds who gather to be in his company brings back memories of our own Shaikh's Ramadan.

May Allah ﷻ make this booklet a source of guidance and knowledge for the students of this path and bless them with the ability to make it a part of their practical lives and establish it as a way of life. In this way, the *faiḍ*[3] of the Shaikh will continue to enlighten people for generations to come.

3 Faiḍ is the spiritual light [*nūr*] that descends from Allah ﷻ and transfers through the shaikh's heart into the murīd. When the murīd sits in the company of his shaikh he gains the faiḍ of his shaikh. Shaikh Khalīl Aḥmad stated that the example of the faiḍ of the shaikh is like the faucet. Though water pours from the faucet the source of this water is the reservoir. Likewise, the shaikh is a channel for the faiḍ while the source of this faiḍ is Allah ﷻ. The more one benefits from his shaikh the more faiḍ he gains just as the more one opens the faucet the more water that pours out.

PREFACE

ALL MUSLIMS KNOW of the greatness of the blessed month of Ramadan. We all derive some measure of its blessings and spiritual benefits depending on the amount of effort, worship, and level of īmān we attain in this blessed month. But the way the friends of Allah ﷻ [*walīs*] welcome and anticipate the arrival of this month is truly beyond our understanding, to say the least.

Those fortunate to spend their Ramadan with Shaikh Thānwī[4], Shaikh Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī[5], and Shaikh al-Ḥadīth Zakariyyā have certainly tasted some portion of the sweetness of this blessed month.

4 Maulānā Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī (1863-1943)- also known as *Ḥakīm al-Umma* (Reviver of the Umma). He wrote hundreds of books on Islamic jurisprudence, taṣawwuf, biographies, and rhetoric. Though, he was most known for reviving true taṣawwuf and clearing away the customs and erroneous beliefs that had come to be associated with it. Hundreds of his talks [*mawāiʻẓ*] and sayings [*malfūẓāt*] are preserved in books. He had sharp wit and intellect and was quick to respond to any objection, argument or question that was put to him. He often said, 'It is only Allah ﷻ who puts it in my heart at that time.'

5 Maulānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī (1879-1957)- He taught for many years in the Blessed Precinct [masjid of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in Madina] in Medina and became known as the 'Shaikh of the Blessed Precinct.' He spent much of his life to protecting the rights of Muslims in British India and struggled to overthrow the British [for which he went to prison numerous times and was imprisoned with his shaikh, Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, in Malta for 3 years]. Despite his busy life, he dedicated the month of Ramadan for worship only, and taught hadith books the remainder of the year in Deoband.

Since the Blessed Prophet ﷺ narrated its virtues in innumerable hadiths, the Shaikhs have always counted each and every second of this blessed month and devoted themselves to worship of Allah ﷻ throughout the month of Ramadan. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself devoted the whole of his time to worship in this month. In one hadith, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "If my *umma* understood how great the month of Ramadan was, they would wish the whole year was the month of Ramadan[6]."

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ always made advance preparation for Ramadan. When the moon was sighted; he spent all his time in worship and advised his family members and the Ṣaḥāba ﷺ to do the same.

He performed *i'tikāf* the last ten days of each Ramadan except for the last year of his life, in which he performed i'tikāf for twenty days. In fact, we find evidence of a collective i'tikāf when one year the Blessed Prophet ﷺ performed i'tikāf the whole month with a large number of Ṣaḥāba ﷺ. The details of this i'tikāf are narrated in the collections of *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*.

Abū Sa'īd Khuḍrī ﷺ narrates,

> The Blessed Prophet ﷺ performed i'tikāf the first ten days of Ramadan and then the following ten days. Then he appeared from the Turkish tent [in which he performed i'tikāf] and said, 'I performed i'tikāf the first ten days in search of the night of *Qadr,* then the following ten days. Then I was told [by an angel] that this night is in the last ten days. Therefore, anyone performing i'tikāf with me should do it the last ten days also. This night was revealed to me and then I was made to forget it. The sign of this night is that I saw myself the morning after prostrating in mire. Therefore, search for this night in the odd nights of the last ten days.'
>
> The narrator says:

6 Ibn Khuzaima, *fī Faḍl Shahr Ramaḍān* | Kanz al-'Ummāl, *fī Faḍl Ṣaum Shar Ramaḍān* | Shu'b al-Īmān, *Faḍā'il Shahr Ramaḍān*.

> It rained that night and the masjid [a simple building of date-palm leaves and branches] began to drip. I saw the residue from mire on the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ forehead the morning of the 21st of Ramadan [7].

Ḥaḍrat [Shaikh Zakariyyā] comments:

> The Blessed Prophet ﷺ performed i'tikāf throughout his life. In this particular year, he performed i'tikāf the whole month and then for twenty days in the last year of his life. But since his continuous habit was i'tikāf in the last ten days of Ramadan, the scholars say that only the last ten days of i'tikāf is an emphasized Sunna [*Sunna mu'akkada*].
>
> We also learn from this hadith that the main reason for performing i'tikāf is the night of Qadr. In reality, i'tikāf is an excellent way to gain the full blessings of this night because for a person in i'tikāf, even while asleep it is as if he is performing worship.
>
> Also, i'tikāf is a time away from the hecticness of the material world, which gives one all the time necessary to focus on worship and remembrance of Allah ﷻ. Therefore, there is no better way of finding the night of Qadr than through i'tikāf. In the first part of Ramadan, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ worshipped a great deal, but nothing compared to his devotion and worship in the last ten days. He would spend the night in worship and order his family to do the same, as narrated in many narrations of *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. In one narration of *Bukhārī*, 'Ā'isha رضي الله عنها narrates, "In the last ten days, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would tie fast his lower garment, stay awake the night and wake his family also."[8] 'Tie fast his garment' could indicate his extra devotion during the last ten days or that he stayed away from his wives during this period.

7 Bukhārī- *Taḥarrī Lailat al-Qadr fi al-Witr.*

8 Bukhārī, *al-'Amal fī 'Ashr al-Awākhir.*

Shaikh al-Ḥadīth [Shaikh Zakariyyā] compiled the daily routines of the elders [*akābir*] in the month of Ramadan and published it under the name "Ramadan of the Elders." I thought [and many agreed with me on this] that it would be best to include Shaikh's own devotions in the month of Ramadan in this booklet and have it published herein.

The details of the Shaikh's Ramadan are not available in any one book. We found that numerous articles were written on this subject by various people and published in different places; also some of these articles were short and concise while others more detailed. At any rate, I was only able to locate articles from the following sources:

1. In his *Āp Bītī* (autobiography), Shaikh Zakariyyā writes about his routine and practices during the month of Ramadan.
Shaikh Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī [aka 'Alī Miāń] in his book, "The Biography of Shaikh al-Ḥadīth" devotes a whole chapter to this topic.
2. Shaikh Nūr al-Ḥasan wrote a booklet under the name "The Way of Shaikh al-Ḥadīth in the Month of Ramadan"
3. Shaikh Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhiānwī wrote on Shaikh's Ramadan of 1400/1980 in the "*Baṣā'ir aur 'Ibar"* section of the monthly *Bayyināt*.
4. Shaikh Taqi al-Dīn Nadwī in his book, "*Ṣuḥbate ba Auliyā"* writes on the Ramadan of 1391/1971.
5. Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīm Nadwī Maẓāhirī also wrote on Shaikh's Ramadan of 1400/1980.
6. Shaikh Muftī Shāhid wrote on the Ramadan of 1401/1981.

Though information about Shaikh's Ramadan is not limited to the aforementioned articles, they are the primary sources from which most of this booklet is put together. As previously mentioned, this booklet is being published as an appendix to Shaikh's own book, "Ramadan of the Elders."

Undoubtedly, this booklet will be of great benefit in showing how the elders valued every minute of this blessed month and in encouraging us to follow in their footsteps.

Last but not least, I cannot end this note without mention of my sons Shaikh Manṣūr, Shaikh Ibrāhīm and Muftī Ḥusain, and my sincere friend Shaikh ʻAbd al-Muʻizz for proofreading and reorganizing the book. May Allah ﷾ grant all of them knowledge, accept them for the work of this *Dīn* and grant them success in this world and the next.

THE FIRST BOOK

The Ramadan of Shaikh Muḥammad Zakariyyā

CHAPTER ONE

The Ramadan of Shaikh al-Ḥadīth

THE MONTH OF Ramadan held a very special place in the life of my shaikh, Shaikh Zakariyyā. Throughout the year he taught, researched, guided students along the spiritual path, wrote, and spread the Dīn, but the month of Ramadan was only for devotion to and remembrance of Allah ﷻ. The great thinker of Islam, Shaikh Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī devoted a chapter in his book "The Biography of Ḥaḍrat" entitled "The importance of Ramadan and the devotions of Ramadan in Ḥaḍrat Shaikh's life." This whole chapter is reproduced below for the benefit of the reader.

The month of Ramadan is the birthdate of the Holy Qur'an and the month of blessings and *raḥma* (mercifulness). It is the season of devotions and worship and the month where spirituality [*ruḥāniyya*] of Islam is celebrated. Ibn 'Abbās ؓ narrates:

> In the month of Ramadan, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ surpassed a strong gale in performing good deeds and worship.[9]

'Ā'isha ؓ narrates:

> When the last ten days of Ramadan arrived, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stayed awake the whole night.[10]

This month is the most beloved to the *'ārifīn* and lovers of Allah

9 al-Sunan al-Kubrā, *al-Jūd wa al-Ifḍāl fī Shahr Ramaḍān*.

10 Muslim, *al-Ijtihād fi al-'Ashr al-Awākhir*.

ﷻ [*'ushāq*]. They count the days of the year in anticipation of this long-awaited month and only after it arrives is the yearning in their hearts extinguished. And we are not talking of a bygone era; this was the state of our elders in recent times. It has been said of the recent elders that no sooner was the moon of Ramadan sighted that they began waiting for the coming Ramadan.

The arrival of Ramadan brought an overwhelming change in the spiritual centers and *khanqās* (sanctums). In addition to the permanent residers [who lived in these khanqās] came the seekers of the spiritual path who travelled from faraway places like shards of metal to a block of magnet or like a moth to the fire. These spiritual centers became hubs of *dhikr* (chanting the name of Allah ﷻ), recitation of Qur'an, voluntary ṣalāt [*nawāfil*] and devotions. Anyone observing this spiritual activity from outside felt as if life truly had no other purpose or that perhaps this would be the last Ramadan. Every devotee competed with the other in the devotions and every day was spent as if it was the last.

Any person who remained in this spiritual atmosphere for even a short time soon became oblivious to the material world. It was a place that warmed and revived the hearts of the dispirited, gave ambition and motivated those who had no feelings for Dīn and purified the ones with corrupted hearts and those who lived a life of sin. It was like a diffusion of light that spread from one heart to another and which wielded the power to give life to the soulless ones. Whoever witnessed such spiritual and mystical gatherings was moved to say that this world cannot come to ruin as long as such gatherings remain, for these gatherings have turned their backs on the material world, the self and the cardinal desire in order to please their Creator and gain for themselves a place in Paradise.

It is unfortunate that there is virtually no documentation about the way of life in the khanqās of Ḥaḍrat Khawāja Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā' from the 8th century or Ḥaḍrat Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Dehlawī from the 13th century. There is no account of the ambiance within these khanqās when Ramadan was celebrated, or of the hum of

dhikr and recitation, the nocturnal worship, or a schedule of the spiritual programs that went on during the month of Ramadan, though we are able to capture some glimpses of them in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād, Siyar al-Auliyā'* and *Durr al-Ma'ārif*. My words cannot express the beauty of these khanqās, but for those who have experienced their spiritual programs, the vigor and power of its shaikhs and the illumination that emanated from them, they will understand what I am talking about.

Indeed, many khanqās from the recent past inherited the spiritual wealth of the 8th and 9th century khanqās and their shaikhs, and the shaikhs of these recent khanqās successfully revived the fervor and spirit that was the life and soul of the older ones. It seemed as if history was once again repeating itself.

There are few people alive today who have witnessed firsthand the month of Ramadan in the lifetime of Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī[11], though many saw the shaikhs after him like Shāh 'Abd al-Raḥīm[12] in Raipūr and Shaikh Thānwī in Thāna Bhawan. When such people remember those times, they are overcome by nostalgia.

Shaikh Madanī and the Month of Ramadan

One of the only shaikhs we know from this era who revived this forgotten Sunna was Shaikh al-Islām Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī.

11 Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī (1829-1905) was the spiritual father and guardian of the school of Deoband. He combined the best of Shari'a and taṣawwuf; he was a brilliant scholar and also on the highest spiritual state of taṣawwuf. In one of his letters to his shaikh, he writes, "praise for me and denigration are equal in my eyes." His letters and fatwas (religious law edicts) tell of his acumen and prove that he was a true inheritor of the insight and intellect of Shāh Walī Allāh.

12 Maulānā Shāh Abd al-Raḥīm Raipurī (1853/1919) was one of the highest-ranking successors of Maulānā Gangohī. He was a master in Taṣawwuf and loved recitation of Qur'an. He established centers for learning recitation of Qur'an [for children and adults] throughout his region and spent his night and days reciting Qur'an in the blessed month of Ramadan. Due to his devotion to Qur'an in Ramadan, no one was allowed to meet him in the holy month. Maulānā Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Raipūrī [next footnote] was his main successor.

Upon the request of his murīds and sincere seekers [*mukhlaṣīn*], he revived the Sunna of iʿtikāf in this blessed month. His students and devotees arrived from every part of the subcontinent to Silhat [Bangladesh], where he spent many of his Ramadan. After that, he spent a few Ramadan in Bāns Kandī [U.P. India] and then one or two years in his hometown of Daudpūra, district of Faizabād [U.P. India] at his residence. Thousands of his murīds, devotees and others looking forward to this month gathered together in these places and stayed as his special guests.

Throughout the month of Ramadan, he himself recited the Qur'an in tarāwīh. Those gathered too devoted all their time to the dhikr of Allah ﷻ, *ashgāl* (meditative devotions), recitation of the Qur'an, and other worships. During this time, they experienced heightened spiritual states and progressed tremendously spiritually. Years after, they remembered the sweetness of īmān they gained in those Ramadan.

Shaikh al-Islām Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī might have continued to spend Ramadan in Daudpūra, and only Allah ﷻ knows how many people would have attained their spiritual objective if he had done so. They would have progressed through the different phases that one who treads this path [of taṣawwuf] must experience, finally completing the course and achieving spiritual purification. Unfortunately, Ḥaḍrat passed away in 1377/1957 and these blessed gatherings came to an abrupt end. When he died, many regretted that they had not derived the full blessings of his auspicious presence while he was still amongst them.

The Ramadan at Raipūr and other places

This month was an essential part of Ḥaḍrat Shaikh ʿAbd al-Q̱ādir Raipūrī's[13] life. Before the partition [between India and Pakistan],

13 Maulana Shaikh ʿAbd al-Q̱ādir Raipūrī (1878-1962)- spent 14 years in the service of his shaikh until his death. He spent many years in spiritual exertions [*mujāhadāt*] and developed profound understanding of life for which he became well known. His discourses are deeply intellectual and offer an in-depth discussion of the intricate aspects of taṣawwuf.

a large number of his votaries from Punjab, many of them scholars, employees of the schools [*madāris*] and successors [*khalīfas*] who had gained their successorship [*khilāfa*] from other shaikhs arrived at the end of Sha'bān to spend the month of Ramadan with him. They isolated themselves from the material world and gathered in a remote village that was without a paved road or a railway station leading to the outside world in order to devote their days and nights to dhikr, ashgāl, and recitation of Qur'an. They spent all their time in worship of Allah ﷻ from the first day of Ramadan until the last, only leaving after they prayed Eid ṣalāt. To understand the beautiful atmosphere of the khanqā and the spirituality of the students who took refuge there in the month of Ramadan, one can refer to my book, "Biography of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Raipūrī."

Aside from Raipūr, Ḥaḍrat spent a few Ramadan in Bahit house [Sahāranpūr, U.P, India], 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's [former minister of Punjab Province] villa in Lahore [Pakistan], Ghaura Galī [Murree Hills, Pakistan], and Masjid Khalsa College [Faisalabad, Pakistan]. The same fervor and spiritual zeal were observed in these Ramadan when hundreds of votaries and devotees gathered and filled the air of the khanqā with the chants of the dhikr of Allah ﷻ, recitation of Qur'an, and other devotions.

CHAPTER TWO

Ḥaḍrat Shaikh [Shaikh Zakariyyā] and the Month of Ramadan

THE REVIVAL AND propagation of this dying Sunna was destined to take place at the hands of a personality who was the inheritor of his predecessors', teachers', and mentors' sublime character and spirituality. He became an author of many books and is seen as one who picked up where his predecessors had left off and succeeded in reviving the Dīn.

One thing common to all the ʿārifīn was their devotion to worship, recitation of Qur'an, seclusion from the material world, and fervor for worship during every second of this blessed month. Ḥaḍrat contributed much to the attainment of these attributes by increasing the intensity of the seclusion from the material world and in the fervor brought towards attaining the pleasure of Allah ﷾. This is better understood with a humorous episode from the life of the Shaikh, which also serves as a reminder of the extraordinary awe with which he approached and celebrated the month of Ramadan.

It was difficult enough for anyone to meet with the Shaikh, but to talk to him was completely out of the question, especially when it was his routine to finish one Qur'an plus a little more every day [in case Ramadan was 29 days]. In that case, there was no chance of meeting him, despite his love for guests who came to meet him and his hospitality towards them.

Ḥakīm Ṭayyib Rāmpūrī was very close to Shaikh. In addition to his close family ties with him, Ḥaḍrat and all the shaikhs had a lot of respect for him as he was from the family of one of the most eminent shaikhs of the *Chistiyya* line, Ḥakīm Diyā al-Dīn.

Once he came to meet Ḥaḍrat in the month of Ramadan. Whenever he came across one of Ḥaḍrat's devotees and expressed his desire to meet him, they would say,

"Ḥaḍrat is busy at this time and will talk to no one until Ramadan is over."

When he finally got the opportunity to see the shaikh he said,

"Oh brother, *al-salāmu 'aleikum*, I only wish to say that, by the grace of Allah ﷻ, Ramadan comes upon us too, but not so feverishly. *al-Salāmu 'alaikum*, I am going.'

CHAPTER THREE

The Ramadan with Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī[14] before his death

ḤAḌRAT WAS BLESSED with the opportunity to be with his Shaikh, Shaikh Sahāranpūrī, for seventeen years from 1328/1910 to 1345/1927. The Ramadan between these two dates are narrated in the second book under the section about Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī. During this long period, Shaikh Sahāranpūrī and his murīd [Shaikh Zakariyyā] never separated from one other and traveled everywhere together.

14 Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī (1852-1927)- wrote the monumental work *Badhl al-Majhūd,* an 18 volume commentary of Abū Dāwūd [one of the famous six books of hadith]. He spent his whole life teaching hadith and was a successor of Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat in Niẓām al-Dīn[15]

THE FOUNDER OF the *Tablīghī Jamā'a*, Shaikh Ilyās,[16] was very much attached to Ḥaḍrat. Though his mentor and shaikh, and more of a father than an uncle, Shaikh Ilyās thought highly of Ḥaḍrat. He often went to Ḥaḍrat for spiritual company and sometimes called Ḥaḍrat to stay with him. He also often insisted Ḥaḍrat spend his Ramadan with him, as has been narrated in Ḥaḍrat's and Shaikh Ilyās's biographies, letters and talks. Below, we reproduce one such letter.

> My heart always wished for your company this Ramadan, but it is better you stay wherever you feel more peace of mind. My heart does not accept putting hurdles [of family and relatives] in the way of aspiring people like you. But anyhow it is best that you follow your heart regardless of the circumstances.

15 Center of the Tablīghī Jamā'a in New Delhi, India.

16 Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Dehlawī (1886-1944)- was the founder of the worldwide Tablīghī Jamā'a. He began nightly ṣalāt [tahajjud] as a child and kept this habit to the end. He spent many years in seclusion, praying long voluntary ṣalāt and meditating [*murāqaba*]. Once, while in Madina Munawwara he decided to settle down there permanently. He went to the blessed grave of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and was told to go back to India because Allah ﷻ wanted to take some work of Dīn from him. He returned to India and started Tablīghī Jamā'a after much reflection. This flourished immeasurably and is still active.

> During Ramadan, I hope for your *du'ās* (supplication) so please do not forget me. You are the fruit of my material world and Hereafter and it is important that you not forget me in your du'ās. It is depressing that my heart and life have been spent in complete ignorance. May Allah ﷻ have mercy on me.

Therefore, in fulfillment of his uncle's desire, Ḥaḍrat spent many Ramadan in Niẓām al-Dīn. Details of these Ramadan will come in the third chapter under the section of Ḥaḍrat Dehlawī [Shaikh Ilyās] who passed away on 21st of Rajab/July 13, 1944. Shaikh Yūsuf [17] who also loved Ḥaḍrat and was enamored of him, was chosen to head the Jamā'a after his father, Shaikh Ilyās, passed away. He put Shaikh in the place of his father and shaikh and begged Ḥaḍrat to spend his Ramadan with him. For his sake, Ḥaḍrat spent a few Ramadan in Niẓām al-Dīn with him.

The Routine of Ḥaḍrat in the Ramadan of 1366/1947

Ḥaḍrat Abū al-Ḥasan writes in 'The biography of Shaikh al-Ḥadīth':

> Ḥaḍrat al-Ḥadīth's schedule changed in the month of Ramadan. In this month, diligence, determination, seclusion from the world, and fervor for worship and recitation became his outstanding qualities. I was fortunate to stay in his company in Ramadan of 1947 at Niẓām al-Dīn. Due to his special attachment and affection for me, I was able to stay in his company and observe him closely. He performed i'tikāf the whole month and finished one Qur'an plus a little extra every day [to complete thirty Qur'ans in case the month was only 29 days]. His daily routine was as follows:

17 Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhelwī (1917-1965)- was the son of Maulānā Ilyās. He headed the Tablīghī Jamā'a after his father passed away and held this position for 21 years. Under his guidance and efforts, the Jamā'a spread throughout the world.

He broke fast with one Madanī date, one cup of tea, and one *pān*[18]. After Maghrib, he recited many parts [*juz'*] of Qur'an in the voluntary ṣalāt [*awwābīn*]. A small gathering was held for devotees and close friends after the voluntary ṣalāt and before 'Ishā. After 'Ishā and *tarāwīḥ*, people gathered around Ḥaḍrat and ate guava, bananas, *phulkiāń* (type of snack) or something of that kind. Ḥaḍrat ate nothing during this time. The aforementioned was his schedule in the summer only. In tarāwīḥ, Shaikh Muḥammad Yūsuf recited Qur'an slowly, pausing after each aya [as a result of which tarāwīḥ would become extremely long]. People sat in the gathering [after tarāwīḥ] for about an hour or an hour and a half, then went to rest while Shaikh began to pray his voluntary ṣalāt, without sleeping or resting for even a minute. He ate *seḥr* [pre-dawn meal] in the last few minutes and lived on this for the remainder of the day. Fajr was prayed at the earliest time. After that, he rested a short while and awoke when the day began. This was the only time of day in which he slept; the remainder of his day was spent reciting the Qur'an. Whatever free time he had was spent in reciting the Qur'an on his own or to someone.

In Ramadan of 1349/1931 in Niẓām al-Dīn, Ḥaḍrat wrote *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān,* which he completed on the 27th of Ramadan.

Ramadan of 1363/1944

Shaikh Ilyās passed away in Rajab of this year. His son, Shaikh Yūsuf, took his place and was chosen the amir of tablīgh when he was thirty-one. Ḥaḍrat spent this Ramadan in Niẓām al-Dīn. His routine was most likely the same as Shaikh Abū al-Ḥasan has described of his Ramadan in 1366/ July, 1947.

18 A preparation of crushed betel nut, shell lime, and other mixtures [sometimes tobacco] wrapped in a betel leaf for chewing.

Falling Unconscious During Ṣalāt

On the 29th of Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat fell in the first *rak'a* (unit of ṣalāt) of ṣalāt and remained sick for the next eighteen days. Everyone was puzzled as to what had happened. Even Ḥaḍrat said nothing beyond asking the doctors what had happened, but no one gave a satisfactory reply. A long time after, one of Ḥaḍrat's favorite successors, Shaikh 'Abd al- Raḥīm Mutāla once asked Ḥaḍrat, "*And Mūsa fell unconscious*?"[19] Ḥaḍrat acknowledged with a simple "Yes."

Ḥaḍrat spent many Ramadan in Niẓām al-Dīn. After a few years, when Shaikh Yūsuf became established as the amir of the Jamā'a [and was not in need of Ḥaḍrat's support as he had been in the beginning of his tenure] and Ḥaḍrat no longer felt the need to spend Ramadan in Niẓām al-Dīn, he began the month of Ramadan in Sahāranpūr. The main benefit of this move was that he became more focused spiritually in Sahāranpūr, as will be mentioned in the next few pages.

19 This is reference to the aya, "*You cannot see Me, but look upon the mountain if it stands still In its place Then You shall see me." So when his Lord appeared to the mountain , He made it collapse to dust, and Mūsa* ﷺ *fell down unconscious*. 7:142

CHAPTER FIVE

The Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat from 1345/1927 to 1383/ 1964

ASIDE FROM THE Ramadan in Raipūr and Niẓām al-Dīn, Ḥaḍrat spent 40 years of Ramadan in Sahāranpūr in seclusion and quietude. His meetings, letter-writing, and correspondence with the murīdīn were terminated until the end of Ramadan, all his time being spent reciting Qur'an. From Ramadan of 1338/1920, he made the habit of staying awake the nights of Ramadan, a difficult devotion which continued until the last years when he became extremely sick. Ḥaḍrat says in his *Āp Bītī*:

> The nights of Ramadan are for none other than to stay awake. I performed my first hajj in 1338/1920. From that time, I made it my habit to stay awake in the nights of Ramadan and have only discontinued this practice in the last few years due to prolonged sickness. I adopted this practice from the Arabs, who stayed awake in the nights of Ramadan.

His Routine

The Ramadan of those years were as follows:
He prayed Fajr in its earliest time; rested for a short while, then [this was the only time he slept] awoke after 2 or 2½ hours and began voluntary ṣalāt in which he recited a few parts of Qur'an. Shortly before the *adhān* of Ẓuhr, he recited a few parts in the Sunnas of Ẓuhr and finished once the second call [*iqāma*] was made.

After the obligatory ṣalāt, he recited a few parts in the Sunna and then went home, where he recited a few parts from the Qur'an. After praying 'Aṣr in the masjid, he recited the Qur'an to someone [different people]. Muftī Sa'īd Aḥmad or Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥusain Ajrārwī listened in the beginning of Ramadan while Muftī Muḥammad Yaḥyā or Ḥakīm Muḥammad Ilyās in the last days. He continued reciting his Qur'an to someone until the time for *ifṭār* (the time to break fast). Shortly before Maghrib, he became absorbed in meditation. Most often, he ate Madanī dates and drank Zamzam to break the fast, then had a cup of tea. He didn't eat anything else besides the aforementioned until after 'Ishā. He recited some part in the voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib. After he prayed 'Ishā in the masjid, he returned home and lead the women in tarāwīḥ, in which he again recited many parts of the Quran.

After tarāwīḥ, a special gathering was held, attended by many of the closest devotees of Ḥaḍrat for about 30 to 45 minutes. This was the only time anyone could meet Ḥaḍrat in a 24 hour time period. Ḥaḍrat rarely took anything but for a cup of tea at the time of breaking fast. After this gathering, he studied various exegeses and contemplated the meanings of the Qur'an. He then stood up for voluntary ṣalāt and recited many parts in it. He ate seḥr in the last minutes and did not drink tea. This was the only time he ate. Recitation of 30 to 35 parts per day was his routine.

An Effort to Finish 60 Qur'ans in One Ramadan

It is known that Imam Abū Ḥanīfa completed 61 Qur'an in Ramadan; one in the day, one at night and one in tarāwīḥ. Likewise, it is said of Imam Shāfi'ī that he completed 60 Qur'an every Ramadan. Once, Ḥaḍrat encouraged his murīds and devotees to do the same.
He said:

> Once, I wrote to some of my friends and asked them to finish reciting 60 Qur'an in one Ramadan. Many of my friends strived to reach that goal. Maulwī In'ām finished 61 Qur'an, one did 56 and some did 60.

In these first few years at Sahāranpūr, Ḥaḍrat did not perform i'tikāf but as has been mentioned previously, spent most of his time reciting Qur'an at his home, [*kacha ghar*] only leaving the house for the obligatory ṣalāt and Sunna. There were few murīds and devotees around him at the time since Ḥaḍrat did not take people in bai'a [pledge]. Instead, he sent whoever wished to take bai'a with him to Shaikh Madanī or Ḥaḍrat Raipūrī, as he did when they came for i'tikāf. Despite his efforts to send everyone off to Shaikh Madanī and Ḥaḍrat Raipūrī some people insisted on staying in Sahāranpūr with Ḥaḍrat, who then advised them to spend all their time in the masjid. Thus, they devoted all their time to worship in the masjid, except for the gathering after 'Ishā with Ḥaḍrat, which was the only opportunity they had to meet with Ḥaḍrat in the day.

He once said in the Ramadan of 1390/1970:

> About 25 years back, the first people to come for Ramadan were Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Kursīwala and Pehlwān. Aside from them, the few others that came commuted between their homes and Sahāranpūr and did not actually reside here. Altogether, we would have about 25-30 people in Ramadan in those days.

An Anecdote

One can imagine the amount of time Ḥaḍrat devoted to worship during the month of Ramadan by the following incident, as narrated by Ḥaḍrat in his *Āp Bītī*:

> My close friend, Ḥakīm Ṭayyib Rāmpūrī [the father of another of my close friends Shaikh 'Āmir] came to visit me frequently in those days. He came for a very short time and was good at providing quick rundowns of the latest news, so he was allowed to visit whenever he wished.
>
> Once, in Ramadan he came at 8 or 9 a.m. He said to Maulwī Naṣīr,

"Open the door."

Maulwī Naṣīr responded, "It is Ramadan."

He decided to knock on the door himself, but Maulwī Naṣīr stopped him. Maulwī Naṣīr explained,

"If he is sleeping, you will ruin his sleep, and if he is awake, he is probably praying voluntary ṣalāt. So knock if you want, but you're probably not going to get a response."

Ḥakīm Ṣāḥib got angry and walked on to the school.[20] On the way, he met Shaikh Manẓūr Aḥmad Ṣāḥib who said,

"Ḥakīm Ṣāḥib, what are you doing here? Don't you know the Shaikh is in Ramadan?" Hearing this, Ḥakīm Ṣāḥib felt his anger towards Maulwī Naṣīr cool. After this, he entered upon Nāẓim Ṣāḥib [the dean of the school] who was dictating letters at the time.

Nāẓim Ṣāḥib was surprised and said,

"Ḥakīm Jī, what are you doing here? The Shaikh is in Ramadan."

Ḥakīm Jī stood up and went to Muftī Ṣāḥib's room. Muftī looked up at him and said the same thing.

Ḥakīm Ṣāḥib finally said, "Isn't there any time I can meet the Shaikh?"

Muftī Ṣāḥib replied, "Half an hour after tarāwīḥ. "

Ḥakīm Ṣāḥib said, "But I have to return to Rāmpūr."

Muftī Ṣāḥib then said, "He will come fifteen minutes before Ẓuhr ṣalāt; if you can catch him then, well and good. Otherwise the only other time is when he returns home after Ẓuhr."

Hakim Sahib did come to the masjid before Ẓuhr but I had already started my Sunna. After Ẓuhr, I made intention for Sunna again. He waited for a long time but, seeing no end to my ṣalāt [I recited one part twice] he took off for a stroll. When he returned I had already gone up to my room and was

20 School refers to the madrasa [traditional Islamic school] of Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm in Sahāranpūr, U.P. India. Madrasa is translated as school throughout the book and either refers to Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm or Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband unless otherwise indicated.

reciting Qur'an to someone. He barged up the stairs in protest and as he reached the top stair, he yelled out,

"Brother Jī! *al-Salāmu 'alaikum*! I won't say much but, by the grace of Allah ﷻ Ramadan comes up on us also, but not so feverishly."

CHAPTER SIX

The First Few I'tikāf in Sahāranpūr from 1384/ Jan, 1965 to 1399/ 1979

Shaikh Nūr al-Ḥasan Kāndhelwī writes,

The number of people who came to spend Ramadan with the Shaikh was increasing and it was understood that they would want to spend the maximum amount of time in Ḥaḍrat's blessed company. Therefore from Ramadan of 1384/1965 Ḥaḍrat decided to perform i'tikāf in the masjid. This i'tikāf took place in the old masjid of the renowned school Māẓahir al-'Ulūm. People were excited to hear of Ḥaḍrat's i'tikāf, and they began coming in from every part of the country. In the last ten days, there were about forty people in i'tikāf. Due to lack of space, many were told not to come. Despite this, enthusiasts continued pouring in until more than a hundred people had gathered, and who were then accomodated in the school building. Regarding this Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat writes in his diary:

> This year, Zakariyyā decided on performing i'tikāf in the masjid. There were seven people in the beginning, which increased to forty by the last ten days. Many were told not to come due to lack of space. The gathering exceeded one hundred people in the last ten days this year.

He said in one of his gatherings regarding the first i'tikāf in Sahāranpūr:

> Twenty to twenty-five people came from Niẓām al-Dīn the year Shaikh Yūsuf passed away in 1384/1965, and said, "We want to perform iʿtikāf in Sahāranpūr." I had performed iʿtikāf in Niẓām al-Dīn several times but never in Sahāranpūr, and the facilities for iʿtikāf in Niẓām al-Dīn were better. I said to them,
>
> "There is no space in the old masjid, you can either stay in the guesthouse or go to the tablīghī center in Sahāranpūr and perform iʿtikāf there." But they insisted they wanted to perform iʿtikāf here only. Finally, it was decided they would alternate in performing iʿtikāf with me.

There is little information on the gatherings of dhikr, the sayings of Ḥaḍrat, and the spiritual atmosphere of this Ramadan aside from whatever is mentioned in Ḥaḍrat's diary. He writes regarding his daily recitation of Qur'an:

> My routine ran as follows:
> In voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib: 8 parts
> After tarāwīḥ before tea: one part
> In *tahajjud* [nightly ṣalāt]: 10 parts
> In pre-noon ṣalāt [*ḍhuhā*]: 6 parts
> In Sunna of Ẓuhr: 3 parts
> Ṣalāt of *tasbīḥ*[21]: 2 parts
> Reciting in the Qur'an after ṣalāt of *tasbīḥ*: 2 parts
> Reciting to Yaḥyā after ʿAṣr: 3 parts
> Combined: 35 parts

Ramadan of 1385/1966 and the Beginning of Iʿtikāf in the New Complex

In Ramadan of 1384/1965, many of those who wished to perform iʿtikāf with Ḥaḍrat were unable to do so due to lack of space in the old masjid. Therefore, in Ramadan of 1385/965-66 the beautiful

21 A Sunna ṣalāt in which the *tasbīḥ*: *Subḥān Allāh wa al-Ḥamd li Allāh wa lā Ilāha illa Allāh wa Allāh Akbar,* is recited seventy-five times per rakʿa in the different motions of ṣalāt.

new masjid built within the new complex [of Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm] was chosen as the new venue for iʿtikāf. The year before, news had leaked out that Ḥaḍrat is performing iʿtikāf, raising the hopes of hundreds of people who wished to perform iʿtikāf with Ḥaḍrat. There was much excitement that the new complex had been chosen as the main venue for iʿtikāf; hundreds made preparations for iʿtikāf with Ḥaḍrat.

People arrived for iʿtikāf and moved with Ḥaḍrat into the new complex the night of the 29th of Shaʿbān. That year, forty people made intention to perform iʿtikāf for the whole month of Ramadan. This gathering increased to 313 people by the end of Ramadan. Shaikh Abū al-Ḥasan writes with reference from one of Ḥaḍrat's helpers:

> I compiled a list of names of the people who came for iʿtikāf from mid-Shaʿbān to the 28th of Ramadan. Altogether, the number of people on this list came out to 313 people.

Ḥaḍrat wrote some details regarding iʿtikāf in the old masjid in his diary. He wrote about the lack of space, the inflow of guests from around the country and his decision to hold iʿtikāf in the new complex the upcoming year. He writes:

> Iʿtikāf was in the old masjid last year, but it soon became too small for the number of people who came for iʿtikāf. I was most dissapointed to find that 15 people who had left Shaikh Yūsuf behind in Niẓām al-Dīn to perform iʿtikāf in Sahāranpūr had to return due to lack of space in the masjid. Unfortunately, they weren't able to perform iʿtikāf in Niẓām al-Dīn either. Therefore, we performed iʿtikāf the whole month in the new complex of the school. Forty people were in iʿtikāf from the very beginning. This number increased until the masjid was full and canopies were pitched in the courtyard.

The routine and devotions during this Ramadan

The Ramadan of 1385/1966 as narrated by Shaikh Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī was spiritually lively and inspiring. He reports from Shaikh Munawwar Ḥusain:

> 20 to 25 people came from Niẓām al-Dīn, the year Shaikh Yūsuf passed away in 1384/ 1965 and said, "We will perform our iʿtikāf here."

Ḥaḍrat's routine was:
Ḥaḍrat was usually praying voluntary ṣalāt when people woke up for seḥr. He ate two eggs and drank one cup of tea shortly before the fast started. He leaned against a pillow and turned towards the people and guests sitting nearby until people stood up for ṣalāt. After ṣalāt, he rested until about 9 a.m. then woke up, attended to his personal needs, and prayed voluntary ṣalāt until noon. He read and responded to any urgent letters until the adhān of Ẓuhr. After adhān, he prayed Sunna and then busied himself in recitation immediately after Ẓuhr until ʿAṣr, during which time guests were advised to perform the dhikr of Allah ﷻ. Therefore, all the *dhākirīn* (the murīds with permission to perform dhikr) began dhikr while others recited Qur'an until ʿAṣr. After ʿAṣr, Ḥaḍrat recited the Qur'an loudly while most guests either listened or recited their own Qur'an. This went on until it was time to break the fast.

A few minutes before ifṭār, when recitation of Qur'an ceased and it was completely silent, everyone went into meditation. Guests were advised to sit by the long mats laid out in the courtyard for ifṭār while Ḥaḍrat moved into his private quarters. Ḥaḍrat broke his fast with one Madanī date and a cup of Zamzam water. He then either went into meditation or sat against the wall. After Maghrib, the guests were given food and Ḥaḍrat started his voluntary ṣalāt. About half an hour before adhān, he ate one or two eggs and drank a cup of tea. Initially, he refused to eat or drink anything but after much urging [one week after Ramadan] Ḥaḍrat agreed to the eggs and cup of tea but nothing else. Ḥaḍrat never ate rice or bread or

any other staple diet throughout the month of Ramadan or even on the last day of Sha'bān.

Before the adhān for 'Ishā, the curtains of Ḥaḍrat's quarters were removed and Ḥaḍrat sat against the wall observing the guests and people in 'itikāf. It was such an inspiring scene. Newcomers came and met with Ḥaḍrat. When the adhān was given, Ḥaḍrat attended to his personal needs, and then began his voluntary ṣalāt. He remained in salat until 'Ishā and tarāwīḥ ṣalāt began.

During this particular Ramadan he listened to three *ḥuffāẓ* (memorizers of Qur'an) in tarāwīḥ. The first was Muftī Yaḥyā, second Ḥāfiẓ Furqān, and then Miāń Salmān [Muftī Yaḥyā's father-in-law].

He and most of the guests performed i'tikāf the whole of Ramadan. Since most people were in i'tikāf, it was difficult finding someone to pick up the mail from the post office. Only three or four of Ḥaḍrat's special devotees were seen outside of i'tikāf.

In the last ten days or shortly before, some friends brought sweetmeats and kabobs and insisted that Ḥaḍrat have some too. Ḥaḍrat occasionally took a bite or two of sweetmeat or kabob but mostly gave it out to others around him. It was announced in the very beginning of Ramadan [upon Ḥaḍrat's orders] that the reading session [*ta'līm*] would be held after tarāwīḥ. Thereafter, the reading session became a part of the daily program after tarāwīḥ, which replaced the earlier gatherings of ifṭār [in the previous Ramadan] when people sat and had snacks in Ḥaḍrat's company. Ḥaḍrat commented about these gatherings that, "it is a waste of time". After the reading session, Ḥaḍrat would say, "Brothers, go and value your time". Therefore, most were seen either in recitation or ṣalāt while Ḥaḍrat busied himself in worship.

When resting, he sometimes uttered something to his helper, Abū al-Ḥasan, who stood nearby. Ḥaḍrat would say, "I am not disturbed by your ṣalāt or recitation of Qur'an."

Despite the rigorous worship, strenuous devotions, and little food, Ḥaḍrat recited 32 parts of Qur'an daily. The following was his daily routine:

Six parts after Maghrib
Approximately three parts during tarāwīḥ
Reading session of a book of *Faḍā'il*[22] until 12 a.m.
Sleep for three and a half hours
Six parts in tahajjud
Pray Fajr in its earliest time then sleep until 9:30 a.m.
Six parts in pre-noon ṣalāt
Letter reading and writing until Ẓuhr
Three parts in the Sunna of Ẓuhr
Eight parts reading in the Qur'an after Ẓuhr
After 'Aṣr, recite to Yaḥyā
Combined: 35 parts
On Average: 32 parts

Ramadan of 1386/1966-67

The Ramadan of 1386/1966-67 was as memorable as the previous one. The number of people for i'tikāf with Ḥaḍrat was greater than in the previous few years. Approximately 100 people moved in on the night of the 29th of Sha'bān with Ḥaḍrat into the new complex. As before, the number of people in i'tikāf increased with time to over 400 people by the end of Ramadan. Shaikh Munawwar Ḥusain logged the programs of this Ramadan. He writes:

> On the 29th of Sha'bān, guests and people in i'tikāf began moving into their designated spaces and spread their beddings before Fajr. It became so full by next morning that the locals who came to pray Fajr were forced to sit in the third row [both the front two rows were full]. Ḥaḍrat had announced after 'Aṣr of the 29th of Sha'bān that the people in i'tikāf should move into the area of i'tikāf. Therefore, people began shifting their belongings and over 90 people entered the masjid of the new complex for i'tikāf. Though the masjid was big and had

22 *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān, Faḍā'il-e-Dhikr, Faḍā'il-e-Ṣalāt, Faḍā'il-e-Tablīgh, Faḍā'il-e-Qura'n.*

> six rows, it was soon full with the belongings and luggage of the people who had come for i‘tikāf. Those who arrived that night, the next morning or later were allotted places in the courtyard. There were a little less than a 100 people at ifṭār and over a 100 at seḥr. When the courtyard was full and guests continued to arrive they were designated places inside the masjid. Every guest was allotted 1½ foot [widthwise] of space during the last two weeks of Ramadan. As the number of guests continued to increase, an enormous pavilion was pitched in the middle of Ramadan outside the masjid, which became full by the end of Ramadan. Six rooms of the student's dormitories were vacated and furnished with beds for special guests who came for i‘tikāf before Ramadan. But as the designated areas became full, only two rooms were kept for special guests while straw mats were laid out on the floor of the other rooms for everyone else.

From the 23rd to the 28th of Ramadan, approximately 315 people were tallied on the mats [at the time of ifṭār]. Everyone else [who could not find space in the masjid] ate with Maulwī Naṣīr al-Dīn.

This year, a large company of tablīgh members and scholars came for i‘tikāf, many of whom were granted successorship by Ḥaḍrat. It was clear to any observer that many of the people in i‘tikāf were from Gujrat, Mumbai, and Pālanpur [India], though the largest number on average were from U.P. [Uttar Pradesh]. At the same time, many guests were from Andaman Islands, Mysore, Chennai [formerly Madras], Bihar, and Assam [different cities or provinces in India] Bangladesh, and South Africa. Many recited Qur'an from Ẓuhr to ‘Aṣr while the dhākirīn were busy in dhikr of Allah ﷻ. Until ‘Aṣr, most performed dhikr loudly while others softly. Still others would be in meditation or reciting the Qur'an. Talking was strictly forbidden and a bulletin clearly stated:

> Those who come here should not talk. If you wish you may sleep or sit quietly but do not talk under any circumstance.

After ʿAṣr, the book [on taṣawwuf] *Imdād al-Sūluk* was read followed by two small booklets, one of them by Imam Suyūṭī. Once they were completed, *Itmām al-Niʿam* [translation of *Tabwīb al-Ḥikam*] and then *Ikmāl al-Shiyam* [commentary of *Itmām al-Niʿam*][23] were read. Throughout Ramadan, many books on taṣawwuf were completed in the reading session. Ḥaḍrat went into his quarters and opened his ifṭār with a Madanī date and Zamzam water [he never ate anything else at this time] and then went into meditation. After Maghrib, he stood up for voluntary ṣalāt and prayed for about 45 minutes. He ate two eggs and drank a cup of tea, then the curtains of his quarters were removed.

At about 7:15 p.m., people from the general public met with Ḥaḍrat and newcomers shook hands with him. He asked how long they planned on staying and issued orders for their accommodations accordingly. During this time, he narrated stories of the elders and people came to take *baiʿa* (pledge with the shaikh). After adhān, he prepared for ṣalāt and then prayed voluntary ṣalāt. After tarāwīḥ, Sura Yāsīn was recited followed by a beautifully long duʿā. If any one of the noted workers of tablīgh was present, Ḥaḍrat asked him to supplicate. Then, the reading session began until 11:30 p.m. after which the workers of tablīgh updated Ḥaḍrat and the gathering on the work of tablīgh.

In the previous Ramadan, lack of food made Ḥaḍrat suffer from extreme thirst. As a result, when he tried to drink, he would have stomach problems that prevented him from eating in Ramadan and even after Ramadan. For this reason, his family and close friends insisted he eat something during ifṭār this Ramadan. In this private gathering, which lasted about 45 minutes, he often sat in contemplation and meditation. He slept after one and woke up at four, attended to his personal needs, and began voluntary

23 Two main books of Taṣawwuf

ṣalāt. Shortly before dawn, he took a few spoonfuls of *pāpe* (type of food), a cup of chicken soup, and then continued voluntary ṣalāt until adhān.

Ramadan of 1387-1388/1967-68

The program and spiritual atmosphere was much the same in the Ramadan of 1387-88/1967-68; the same gatherings of dhikr and recitation of Qur'an, Ḥaḍrat's devotions and the murīds' diligence in worship.

The following Ramadan the numbers had increased. As the numbers swelled and the area of i'tikāf became small, organizers began demarcating a 1½ foot of area to each person. Once the masjid was full, newcomers were accommodated for the night in rooms that were set aside for sleeping only, as they otherwise were spending their whole day in the masjid.

My First Meeting With Ḥaḍrat and Bai'a to Him

I first took bai'a with Shaikh 'Abd al-Q̱ādir Raipūrī in 1957 when I was in medical school. As a student, Ḥaḍrat did not want that I do any dhikr or ashgāl. In 1961, I finished my last exam and went straight to Raipūr. Fortunately, I met with Shaikh Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī in Sahāranpūr as he was leaving for Raipūr and was blessed with his company on the journey to Raipūr. Ḥaḍrat prescribed dhikr to me in that meeting, though I never kept at it due my carelessness and indifference. Then, Shaikh 'Abd al-Q̱ādir Raipūrī passed away in 1962 and I had meanwhile moved to Saudi Arabia. In 1964, I was blessed with the opportunity to perform hajj with Ḥaḍrat and Shaikh Yūsuf and stay with Ḥaḍrat for eight days in Madina after hajj. During this time, I asked Ḥaḍrat to accept me in bai'a but he refused saying, "I do not accept bai'a of anyone who has already taken bai'a with Shaikh Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī or Shaikh 'Abd al-Q̱ādir Raipūrī. Their bai'a is my bai'a; therefore, if you have any questions, just ask [there is no need for bai'a]."

After that, I returned to Madina [where I practiced medicine]

and Ḥaḍrat left for India. Shortly after, I received the booklet of daily devotions [without request] from Ḥaḍrat, a clear sign that Ḥaḍrat had accepted me in his bai'a.

This was the beginning of my correspondence with Ḥaḍrat. In 1386/1966-67, I went to visit Ḥaḍrat in Sahāranpūr and stayed with him for 21 days. Everyone I met asked why I had come after Ramadan and that I should have been here for Ramadan. Ḥaḍrat also asked Abū al-Ḥasan to show me the place where he [Ḥaḍrat] performed i'tikāf during the month of Ramadan. After this, I left Sahāranpūr with the firm intention to return the next year to perform i'tikāf with Ḥaḍrat for the whole month of Ramadan.

I had known Sufi Iqbāl since 1957 when we had became acquainted through the work of tablīgh. We became good friends and I mentioned to him my intention of spending the next Ramadan with Ḥaḍrat. He was a little hesitant about leaving the blessed city of Madina for India but as I insisted, he decided to accompany me on the trip.

In Sha'bān of 1387/1967, we departed from Madina and arrived in Sahāranpūr on the 29th of Sha'bān via Riyadh, Dhahran, Karachi, Mumbai and then Dehli. Malik 'Abd al-Ḥaqq also joined us from the center of tablīgh in Niẓām al-Dīn with his three sons. We left on Friday, the morning of 29th of Sha'bān and arrived in Sahāranpūr at about Jumu'a time. After Jumu'a, we came forward to shake hands with Ḥaḍrat. I was the first to hug Ḥaḍrat. He shook and trembled. Then everyone moved forward one by one to hug him. Ḥaḍrat remained in this state [crying] the whole day. He cried profusely and said repeatedly, "Look! These people left the Blessed Precincts [Makka and Madina] to visit me" and cried as he spoke. He remained in this state throughout the night.

An Amazing Incident

When Sufi Iqbāl and I left Madina for Sahāranpūr we informed Ḥaḍrat throughout the journey of our whereabouts. During the journey, one woman from Ḥaḍrat's family saw the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in her dream. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ told her, "Tell Shaikh al-

Ḥadīth that two of my special guests are coming. Make sure you take care of them”. [I don’t remember the exact words but this was the gist of what the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said].

Ḥaḍrat interpreted this to mean that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was referring to Dr. Ismā‘īl and Sufi Iqbāl. Our elders were head over heels over the smallest gesture from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Ḥaḍrat was profoundly affected by this instruction; he treated us with the utmost respect and took special care of us in every way, spiritually, financially, externally and internally. His special blessings and affections for us are not something I can put into words. Throughout the month, he granted us his time and special attention and on the night of Eid during tahajjud time, he granted us successorship. All praise is due to Allah ﷾ and gratitude is owed to Allah ﷾ alone.

That night I was sitting in Ḥaḍrat’s presence and a few others were also nearby. Bismil Ṣāḥib, a well-known chanter [*na‘t khāń*] of *na‘at* (hymns in praise of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ) came in. He asked Ḥaḍrat if he could recite a na‘at but Ḥaḍrat declined saying, “This is how innovations [*bid‘a*] are born. The purpose of these gatherings [where na‘at were chanted and dhikr was held] was good in the beginning. When a shaikh passed away, his successors and devotees would come together and say, ‘when shaikh was alive we gathered here [at the shaikh’s khanqā], but how will we come together now?’ They finally agreed to meet once a year, but were still undecided as to when and where. They decided the best place to hold their annual gathering would be by the shaikh’s grave, and the best time, the day the shaikh passed away since no one would ever forget that date. This was the beginning of these festivals [*urs*][24], but look at them now?”

A similar incident took place in Madina. The program was the same in Madina as in India, with the common gathering being held after ‘Aṣr. I don’t know the exact year, but I do remember that

24 Festivals held around the graves of elders. Shaikh Zakariyyā explains that the beginning of these festivals were simple gatherings where the students of a shaikh gathered by his grave. But as time passed these gatherings became festivals that bred innovations and pagan customs [*shirk*].

Ḥaḍrat had spent a significant amount of time in Madina before this Ramadan. Once, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sharqī, a reknowned poet and chanter, came and sat in the gathering. Shaikh ʿAbd al-Razzāq came up to Ḥaḍrat and requested, "Ḥaḍrat, Sharqi Ṣāḥib is present. His naʿats are beautiful, maybe he should chant something in the gathering." Ḥaḍrat replied, "No my brother, no."

After that, I spent my Ramadan from 1388/1968 to 1399/1979 in Sahāranpūr, except for the Ramadans of 1389/1969, 1393/1973, and 1398/1978, which I spent in the Blessed Precincts.

Ramadan of 1391/Oct, 1971

The Ramadan of 1391/1971 was spent in Sahāranpūr. The programs were the same as in the previous Ramadan. Shaikh Taqī al-Dīn writes:

Most people woke up an hour and a half before dawn, ate seḥr after tahajjud and recited Qur'an or prayed voluntary ṣalāt until dawn. Fajr was prayed in the earliest time. Everybody rested until 9 or 10 a.m; at that time, the morning took on the semblance of the night. At 10 a.m. or 10:30 a.m, either a talk is delivered or Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jilānī's discourses are read in the reading session. Then, everyone recites the Qur'an until Ẓuhr. *Khatm-e-khawājagān*[25] and duʿā is held after Ẓuhr, followed by the gathering of dhikr until ʿAṣr. After ʿAṣr, *Imdād al-Sulūk* or *Ikmāl al-Shiyam* are usually read in the reading session until 15 to 20 minutes before Maghrib. Then, everyone makes duʿā individually. After ifṭār and some time after Maghrib, food and tea are served.

Shortly after, everyone gathers by Ḥaḍrat's room and he advises those gathered [most of his sayings from the book *Suḥbat-e-bā Auliyā* (Company of the Friends of Allah سبحانه وتعالى) are transcriptions

25 The method of khatm-e-khawājagān is as follows:
First, one recites *ṣalāt* and *salām* three times.
Recite لاحول ولاقوة الا بالله لاملجأ ولامنجأ من الله الا اليه counting each reading on a seed
Recite Sūrat al-Inshirāḥ counting each reading on a seed.
Repeat لاحول ولاقوة الا بالله لاملجأ ولامنجأ من الله الا اليه, each reading counted on a seed.
Complete the *khatm* with *ṣalāt* and *salām* three times.

from these gatherings] though, the previous Ramadan the book, *Nisbat-e-Ṣūfiā'* [by Shāh Waṣī Allāh, successor of Shaikh Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī] was read in this gathering. One of the most beautiful sights is when Ḥaḍrat accepted people in bai'a shortly before the adhān time [will be mentioned in detail later]. 'Ishā ṣalāt, tarāwīḥ and witr take about a 1 ½ hour and one Qur'an is completed every ten days. Maulwī Salmān, who recites clearly and fluently, leads the tarāwīḥ for twenty days. Different people have led in the last ten days in various years. Sura Yāsīn and du'ā is held after witr. Some people who started to memorize Qur'an will recite a portion of Qur'an to Ḥaḍrat for blessing. In this case, the du'ā after Sura Yāsīn is delayed until after their inauguration. A short gathering is held after the du'ā in which *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* and *Faḍā'il-e-Durūd* are most often read. Sometimes, only the different readings of the *ṣalāt* and *salām* (peace and blessings upon the Blessed Prophet ﷺ) are read from *Faḍā'il-e-Durūd*. After reading session, everyone will either stand up for voluntary ṣalāt or recite Qur'an. Most go to sleep at 12 a.m, while a few choose to remain awake for the whole night.

Ramadan of 1394/1974

The Ramadan of 1394/1974 was spent in Sahāranpūr also. We see the same fervor and devotion [the mark of our Ḥaḍrat] this Ramadan as in the previous ones. One of the observers of Ḥaḍrat's routine [who was fortunate to spend this Ramadan with Ḥaḍrat] wrote his observations of Ḥaḍrat's daily routine in his diary. He writes:

> The program begins as follows:
> Everybody wakes up at 3 a.m. for seḥr and guests usually finish eating and drinking tea by 4:30 a.m. It is said that there are about 650 guests in i'tikāf this year [this rose to 1200 in the last ten days].
>
> Fajr is prayed in its earliest time and then all guests rest until 8:30 or 9 a.m. As the rule was that no one was allowed to wake

anyone up except for ṣalāt time, the guests could sleep for as much and for as long as they liked.

At exactly 10 a.m, Shaikh Balyāwī gave a talk for approximately 40 minutes. Whoever is awake listens to the talk while others sleep. By the time the talk ends, everyone is awake and busy in voluntary ṣalāt or recitation of Qur'an. This continues until noon, after which everyone rests for a short while. The adhān of Ẓuhr is called at 2 p.m. and the khatm-e khawājagān is held immediately after. Then the dhikr in the gathering [of dhikr] begins in a slow crescendo. People prescribed dhikr perform their dhikr while the rest recite Qur'an. The effervescence and spiritual power that emanates from this gathering of dhikr cannot be expressed in words. Of all the programs of the day, it is by far the most spiritually elevating and vigorous.

After the gathering, some people in i'tikāf rest while the restless souls begin reciting Qur'an. Some of this time is spent in sleep, *tasbīḥ* [*subḥān Allāh, al-ḥamd li Allāh, Allāh Akbar*- usually read on beads] and recitation of the Qur'an until 'Aṣr. After that, *Ikmāl al-Shiyam* or *Imdād al-Sulūk* is read in the reading session [presently we are on *Imdād al-Sulūk*]. Shaikh Mu'īn al-Dīn Murādabādī, who reads in the session, inspires the listeners with the passion and urgency in his tone. Those who are unaware [like me] of the terminology of taṣawwuf and who are incapable of understanding the high spiritual states and feelings associated with this path have a difficult time understanding the book. Still, the Shaikh's inspiring voice and fervor holds us to our place. This gathering ends 10 to 15 minutes before ifṭār time.

After this, everybody moves towards the dining area. The ifṭār is simple, including guavas, bananas, *chāt*, sliced apples and peas. Cold water is plentiful and Indian dates are arranged at every few feet while Madanī dates are also handed out occasionally for blessing. A short interval is provided between ifṭār and ṣalāt for guests to wash their hands and mouth. After

the voluntary ṣalāt, some continue praying while others recite Qur'an in their voluntary ṣalāt. Dinner starts at 7 p.m., ending at about 8:15 p.m. Dinner consists of bread [*nān*], meat, Gujrātī *khichrī* (boiled rice with lentils), and pilaf. After dinner, Shaikh Muftī Kifāyat Allāh and a crew of Gujrātī brethren expertly prepare and serve tea to the guests. Those who have finished their dinner and tea, move towards Ḥaḍrat's private quarters. At about 8 p.m, the curtains of his quarters are removed and Ḥaḍrat narrates stories, advises¸ and reveals the intricate aspects of taṣawwuf. Shortly before the end, people who wish to be taken in bai'a are accepted in bai'a; Maulwī Aḥmad Laulāt Gujrātī repeats the words of Ḥaḍrat aloud for all to hear. After the bai'a, a short du'ā is made and those who take bai'a are instructed to take a copy of the booklet on the prescribed *Chishtiyya* devotions and necessary daily devotions for beginners.

'Ishā begins at 9 p.m. and the tarāwīḥ fifteen minutes after that, ending between 10:30 p.m.-10:45 p.m. Presently Shaikh Salmān, who is also the imam of the five daily ṣalāt, recites three parts in tarāwīḥ. Tarāwīḥ is followed by Sura Yāsīn and a long du'ā by Shaikh Balyāwī, then reading from *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* by Shaikh Shāhid. Following this, Ḥaḍrat greets the newcomers and those departing. All the collective programs of the day end here.

It is usually approximately 11:30 p.m. by this time. After this, everyone [those in and out of i'tikāf] , gather with friends for snacks and camaraderie. After the snack, some go to sleep while others recite the Qur'an; some begin reciting Qur'an in voluntary ṣalāt. People actively participate in these congregations of voluntary ṣalāt and one can see big and small groups scattered throughout the masjid praying. Up to 60 to 70 people are observed standing behind one *ḥāfiẓ* of Qur'an. This continues until seḥr time and is a part of the daily routine.

Ramadan of 1395/1975

This Ramadan was unique in many ways. The public and number of visiting scholars and employees of the schools were significantly larger, and the gathering of this Ramadan had received the blessings of a great many of the shaikhs. Approximately 1000 people were present from the beginning of Ramadan and like the previous years, the numbers continued to swell until the very end. On the 27th night, there were an estimated 2700 people. Because of the crowd, both levels of the masjid and both the covered and uncovered areas of the courtyard had reached full capacity. As a result, it was difficult to go for ablution and to the bathroom from the place of i'tikāf.

On this night, some people observed an estimated 27 huffāẓ deeply engrossed in recitation of Qur'an and rows upon rows standing behind them seeking the mercy of Allah ﷻ and refuge from the Hellfire. One of these huffāẓ can never be forgotten. He was engrossed in ṣalāt. He was trembling, shaking, and crying and his humbleness was clearly evident in his recitation.

Ḥaḍrat himself has written the schedule of programs for this Ramadan in his *Āp Bītī*. He writes:

Two parts after Maghrib, then tea

Attending to personal needs then gathering from 8 p.m.-8:30 p.m. which includes bai'a and discussion.

'Ishā and tarāwīḥ from 9 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. followed by Sura Yāsīn and du'ā

Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān until 11:15 p.m, then shaking hands with the departees

Door is closed from 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. and reopened at 3 a.m. and seḥr is prepared

Two parts in tahajjud; rest after Fajr until 9 a.m.

After rest: recitation of two parts in the Qur'an until 11 a.m.

From 11a.m. to 1 a.m: miscellaneous

After Ẓuhr: khatm-e-khawājagān, dhikr, and recitation of two parts

After 'Aṣr: *Irshād al-Mulūk* and *Ikmāl al-Shiyam*

Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī Miāń writes:

> From 1385/1965, Ḥaḍrat began spending his Ramadan in the new complex of the student's dormitories. Every year the number of guests increased. In 1385/1965, there were 40 guests for iʿtikāf, increasing to 200 by the end of the month, whereas in the Ramadan of 1386/1966-67, the number of people started at 200. In 1387/1967 canopies were pitched in the courtyard and student dormitories were opened for arriving guests. The Ramadan of 1394/1974 was in Sahāranpūr; by this time the second story of the masjid in the student's dormitories had been constructed. When more space was required, the dormitories were opened to accommodate the guests. The first of Ramadan began with an estimated 800 to 900 people. Maulwī Naṣīr al-Dīn reported that by the end of the month the number exceeded 1800, but a more accurate count is about 1000 in the first ten days and approximately 2000 on the 27 and 28th of Ramadan.
>
> The program was as follows:
>
> - A talk for approximately one hour, which began at 11 a.m.
> - Khatm-e-Khawājagān followed by the gathering of dhikr from Ẓuhr to ʿAṣr
> - *Ikmāl al-Shiyam* and *Irshād al-Mulūk* after ʿAṣr
> - An hour of voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib then dinner
> - Meeting newcomers and locals until adhān of ʿIshā
>
> Ḥaḍrat stayed in the masjid for many days after Eid in order to meet the large number of people who had come for iʿtikāf [everyone wished to meet him]. Shaikh writes of the first day of Shawwāl of 1394/1974:
>
> I guessed that there were about 50 to 100 people left based on the number of people who came to meet me, but I later learned that over 500 people stayed for one or two more days.
>
> The guests and people in iʿtikāf were devoting all their time in worship, dhikr, recitation of Qur'an and their prescribed

devotions, but Ḥaḍrat still announced in his Ramadan at Sahāranpūr:

Sleep and eat as much as you like, but do not talk, otherwise you will be deprived of the blessings of this month.

Even then, he was always concerned with whether people were making the most of their time and spending it wisely. Sometimes, he self-deprecatingly called it a festival.

In his letter to me [Dr. Ismā'īl Memon] dated February 24, 1976, he writes:

You are probably aware that for years I have been asking Maulwī Munawwar Ḥusain, Muftī Maḥmūd and close friends whether there is more benefit or harm in this festival?

Ramadan of 1396/1976

This year, a state of emergency was declared in the country [India]. There was terror in the streets and young and old men were scared of being sterilized.[26] Despite the situation, many people still came for Ramadan and enjoyed the blessings and raḥma of this month under Ḥaḍrat's auspices. The program of this Ramadan is taken from Ḥaḍrat's diary:

After Maghrib: one part in the voluntary ṣalāt
My talk in gathering replaced by reading of Sufi Iqbāl's *Akābir kā Sulūk* due to weakness
Bai'a after gathering until adhān of 'Ishā
Tarāwīḥ from 9:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Doors are closed after tarāwīḥ at 12 a.m.

Reading session of *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* after tarāwīḥ was cancelled this year because of a law that permitted the authorities to seize any man found after 11:30 p.m. to be sterilized. This law has been in full force for the past year; Muslims are distraught and are facing the repercussions of

26 A government initiative to sterilize Indian males as a birth control me - sure to control population, though Muslims were targeted the most.

their bad deeds. Therefore, the following was announced after tarāwīḥ, "All locals please leave immediately. You have already sat in the reading session of this book and don't want the police to harass you."

Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān until 12 p.m.

Meeting with people until 1 p.m. and resting from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Everyone wakes at about 2:30 a.m. for seḥr; after seḥr and attending to their personal needs they recite Qur'an until 4 a.m.

Tahajjud and attending to personal needs until 4 a.m.

Because of weakness, I recited one instead of two parts which I completed with great difficulty

Seḥr at 4 a.m. and Fajr immediately after dawn

Meet newcomers then rest until 9 a.m.

Then, say one part to someone instead of reciting in the Qur'an [as was Ḥaḍrat's habit the previous Ramadan]

Then pre-noon ṣalāt, *ṣalāt al-ḥāja,*[27] and *taḥiyyat al-shukr*[28] until eleven

Rest from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

One part in the Sunnas

Khatm-e-Khawājagān after Ẓuhr

[This year, the one part he recited to various people in the previous Ramadan was cancelled]

Though, I recited to Maulwī Aḥmad after Ẓuhr, sometimes I was forced to stop after a short while

Gathering of dhikr at 4:30 p.m.

Adhān of 'Aṣr, then 'Aṣr at 5:30 p.m.

After 'Aṣr: reading session of *Irshād al-Mulūk* until ifṭār

This year, Shaikh Balyāwī's talk was from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

As a result of the aforementioned situation in the country, we observe the number of people attending were fewer than the previous Ramadan: everything else stayed the same.

27 Ṣalāt for seeking help from Allah ﷻ in an important matter.

28 Ṣalāt for expressing thanks to Allah ﷻ for his bounties.

Ramadan of 1397/1977

This Ramadan was also spent in Sahāranpūr. There were more people than in the previous year and the daily program was also the same as in the previous year. The following is an excerpt from Ḥaḍrat's diary:

> Due to dizziness, I could not recite Qur'an after Maghrib
>
> Other daily devotions were about the same as in the previous years: *taḥiyyat al-shukr, ṣalāt al-ḥāja,* different *aurād*[29] (uttered devotions) [i.e. *Ḥizb al-Baḥr,* a du'ā booklet]
>
> Tea only; I was unable to eat anything due to sickness
>
> After dinner, public gathering from 8:30 p.m 9 p.m; Bai'a was also performed at this time.
>
> Adhān after 9 p.m.
>
> Tarāwīḥ led by Salmān from 9:30 p.m. to 10:45 p.m. followed by reading of *Akābir kā Ramaḍān* to 11:30 p.m.
>
> Doors closed from 12:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. but opened half an hour early because of the large gathering.
>
> Rest after Fajr to 9 a.m.
>
> After 9 a.m.: reciting any sura in pre-noon ṣalāt then recitation of one part two times from the Qur'an
>
> Recite Sura Yāsīn three times and send the rewards to the elders
>
> Meeting with different people from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m
>
> Rest from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.
>
> Since the fever began from Monday [29th of Sha'bān], I could take no more than a cup of tea [he drank only a half a

29 Aurād are devotions which require movement of the tongue whether they be du'ās read from a book or *tasbīḥ* with beads. Ashgāl, on the other hand, are purely meditative where no movement of the tongue is required. Both aurād and asghāl are not objectives in taṣawwuf but means to the objective which is: that you worship Allah ﷻ as if you see Him, and that if you cannot see Him, that He sees you [Bukhārī, *Su'āl Jibrā'īl* ﵇ *al-Nabiyy* ﷺ].

cup] and two eggs daily throughout the month of Ramadan.

Guests begin arriving from 2:30 a.m. to 4 a.m.

After seḥr and tea, everything is wrapped up by 4:15 a.m.

Shaikh Balyāwī gave the talk from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. until he became sick. Muḥammad 'Inayat took over after him.

After Ẓuhr: khatm-e-Khawājagān then dhikr

After 'Aṣr, *Akābir kā Sulūk* then *Irshād al-Mulūk* then *Ikmāl al-Shiyam*

After tarāwīḥ: *Akābir kā Ramaḍān* then *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān*

Talk by Muḥammad 'Ināyat from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m; Shaikh Balyāwī gave the talks the previous Ramadan but fell sick. Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥalīm took his place but was later dismissed when he became overzealous and started criticizing the schools and khanqās.

This year, I could neither recite much Qur'an nor say it to anyone because of dizziness. I finished two Qur'ans reciting in the Qur'an.

The gatherings from Maghrib to the adhān of 'Ishā were cancelled but for discussions and meetings with the scholars regarding different methods of increasing funds for the schools and exhorting them to eliminate hostilities amongst themselves.

This excerpt informs us of other devotions of Ḥaḍrat that have not been previously mentioned in this book or in his *Āp Bītī*.

Ramadan of 1399/1979

This was the last Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat in Sahāranpūr. The programs and devotions were the same as in the previous Ramadan.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat in the Blessed Precincts

ḤAḌRAT SPENT SOME of his Ramadan in the Blessed Precincts. In his first years, he spent three Ramadan in the company of his shaikh Shaikh Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī in 1338/1920, 1344/1926, and 1345/1927, the details of which can be found under the section of Ḥaḍrat Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī's Ramadan. After that, he spent the Ramadan of 1389/1969, 1393/1973, and 1398/1978 in the Blessed Precincts also.

Ramadan of 1389/1969

In 1388/1968, the elders of tablīgh travelled together for hajj [as they did every other year). In their meeting, it was decided that Ḥaḍrat would accompany them for hajj that year [1389/1969] though he was unable to due to some tablīgh-related issues. After their return, Ḥaḍrat intended to go for *'umra* (lesser pilgrimage). Coincidentally, Shaikh 'Alī Miāń was already booked to go for 'umra, therefore in 1389/1969 both Ḥaḍrat and Shaikh 'Alī Miāń departed for 'umra together. In those days, I was working in Dammām. I boarded a flight from Riyadh and carried a thermos of cold Zamzam water with me for Ḥaḍrat [knowing he loved cold Zamzam water]. When I presented it to him, he said, "Oh, I am fasting." Ḥaḍrat made a point of keeping his ablution and fast at every station of his journey in Sahāranpūr, Delhi, Jeddah, Makka and Madina. Ḥaḍrat suffered severe incontinence for a long time but he still made the

extra effort and kept himself in the state of ablution throughout his journey.

On this trip, he stayed in the Blessed Precincts for eight months [including the month of Ramadan]. Before Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat had decided he was going to spend half the month in Makka and the other half in Madina. Ḥaḍrat writes in his *Āp Bītī*:

'Alī Miāń and I departed from Madina on Sunday the 20th of November [29th of Sha'bān] at about 3 a.m. [9 a.m.]. Since Rābiṭat al-'Ālam al-Islāmī[30] had provided 'Alī Miāń with a car, we went in his car to Makka and arrived in Madrasa Ṣaulatiyya at 10:30 a.m. [4:30 p.m.[31]] and prayed 'Aṣr. Most of the other friends came with Dr. Ismā'īl and Malik 'Abd al-Ḥaqq in their car. As is my habit, I stayed in the Blessed Precinct from Maghrib to 'Ishā . We had only finished 'Ishā and returned to Madrasa Ṣaulatiyya when we heard shots ring out [announcing the beginning of Ramadan]. We were told that the custom was to fire shots to inform everyone of the start of Ramadan and that tarāwīḥ would begin half an hour after 'Ishā. Despite that, when we rushed to the Blessed Precinct after attending to our personal needs and ablution, we found we had already missed two rak'as of tarāwīḥ. The tradition in both the Blessed Precincts is that two ḥuffāẓ lead the tarāwīḥ, each reciting half a part of Qur'an. After tarāwīḥ and dinner, it was my habit that I would go to Tan'īm [for 'umra] and perform one 'umra every day. Sometimes I would be accompanied by 'Alī Miāń, but he usually performed his 'umra during the day. I stayed in Makka for fifteen days and departed for Madina on Wednesday, the 24th of November [15th of Ramadan]."

Daily program

In Makka, Ḥaḍrat stayed in Madrasa Ṣaulatiyya during the day and at Brother Sa'dī's house at night. Everyone rested after Fajr in Brother

30 The World Muslim League.

31 In Saudi Arabia, the timetable was set according to the new Islamic day after Maghrib [sunset], which brings a difference of six hours between Saudi time and GMT.

Saʿdī's Masjid. At 10 a.m, Ḥaḍrat went to Madrasa Ṣaulatiyya and prayed voluntary ṣalāt while the murīdīn either completed their daily devotions next to Ḥaḍrat or went to the Blessed Precinct [for *ṭawāf* (circumambulation)-translator]. The gathering of dhikr after Ẓuhr were attended by locals and outsiders. After the gathering, some stayed on to recite Qur'an or complete their daily devotions while others rested. Ḥaḍrat himself rested during this time. Before ʿAṣr, he went to the Blessed Precinct and recited Qur'an to one of his helpers [mostly Shaikh Ismāʿīl Badāt]. During this time, his devotees either performed ṭawāf or recited Qur'an. Ifṭār was immediately after adhān of Maghrib; Ḥaḍrat broke his fast with Madāni dates and Zamzam [there was about a ten minute interval between the adhān and ṣalāt]. After Maghrib and voluntary ṣalāt, Ḥaḍrat left for Madrasa Ṣaulatiyya. As was his habit, he never ate anything, though the attendees and his devotees did. After Ḥaḍrat attended to his personal needs and performed ablution, he departed for the Blessed Precinct. After ʿIshā and tarāwīḥ, he returned to Madrasa Ṣaulatiyya, attended to his needs and performed ablution. He then sat in the car to go to Tanʿīm and perform his ʿumra. The murīdīn and others also followed Ḥaḍrat to perform their ʿumra. After ʿumra, everyone went to Brother Saʿdī's house and had a light snack of samosas, toasted rice, and fruits, etc. Then, Ḥaḍrat rested for a short time while the devotees went to the Blessed Precinct for ṭawāf or rested for a short while. After about two hours of rest, Ḥaḍrat recited Qur'an in tahajjud. Everyone came together at seḥr. After Fajr, Ḥaḍrat rested while the devotees either rested or prayed voluntary after post-sunrise ṣalāt [*ishrāq*] then went to sleep.

On the 15th of Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat departed from Makka to Madina. For five days, Ḥaḍrat moved back and forth between his residence and al-Masjid al-Nabawiyy. On the 20th of Ramadan after ʿAṣr, he moved in with his helpers to al-Masjid al-Nabawiyy for the last ten days of iʿtikāf. Besides the Indians and Pakistanis, hundreds of people joined Ḥaḍrat in iʿtikāf from South Africa, England, and many other countries. Ḥaḍrat made everyone his guest and provided for their food and drink and other basic

needs. The program in al-Masjid al-Nabawiyy was the same as in Sahāranpūr. Besides the gathering of dhikr that is after Ẓuhr, Ḥaḍrat and the people in i'tikāf spent all their time in their prescribed daily devotions.

After Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat stayed for a few days in Madina then departed for Pakistan. After touring various cities in Pakistan, he returned to Sahāranpūr.

Ramadan of 1393/1973

In 1393/1973, Ḥaḍrat migrated to Saudia Arabia. As his intentions were pure and noble, Allah ﷻ opened the doors for him to obtain a visa [*iqāma*] and citizenship shortly thereafter [details of which can be read in *Āp Bītī*]. It was Ḥaḍrat's rule that he sought guidance from Allah ﷻ through *istikhāra*[32] for every matter; he performed istikhāra about where to spend Ramadan many months prior to Ramadan and then spent his Ramadan accordingly.

This year he was told to spend Ramadan in the Blessed Precincts. He announced that he would not keep any guests except for three of his own full-time helpers; everyone else was asked to arrange for their own food and accommodations.

The daily program and routine of Ḥaḍrat was the same as in 1389/1969.

Ramadan of 1398/1978

This year Ḥaḍrat was extremely sick and weak. His visits to the Blessed Precinct decreased significantly and sometimes his condition became so severe that many times his friends lost hope in him. The Ramadan of 1398/1978 came in these circumstances. This year, Ḥaḍrat stayed the whole month in Madina, residing in the ground floor of Madrasa al-'Ulūm al-Shar'ia [as he always did whenever he stayed in Madina]. Ḥaḍrat's devotees came from different places; all devotees and attendees arranged for their own

32 A Sunna ṣalāt of two rak'a after which one supplicates and asks Allah ﷻ to guide him in a matter concerning him.

accommodations, though food and drink was provided by Ḥaḍrat, which everyone ate collectively. Tarāwīḥ was held in Madrasa al-'Ulūm al-Shar'ia and led by Shaikh Muḥammad Ghārdī Afrīqī and Ḥāfiẓ Zubair.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat in Faisalabad, Pakistan 1400/July, 1980

ḤAḌRAT'S FRIENDS IN Pakistan had been insisting upon Ḥaḍrat's spending at least one Ramadan in Pakistan, since most Pakistanis could not travel to the Blessed Precincts or India for financial reasons or as a result of visa problems. Muftī Zain al-'Ābidīn was the most persistent that Ḥaḍrat should spend Ramadan in the masjid of his school. Therefore, after istikhāra and other signs, it was decided that Ḥaḍrat would spend the Ramadan of 1400/1980 in Faisalabad. Three articles highlight the Ramadan of 1400/1980,

1. *Baṣā'ir aur 'Ibar*- a column from the monthly *Bayyināt* by Shaikh Yūsuf Ludhiānwī.
2. *Ma'mūlāt-e-Ramaḍān* - Shaikh 'Abd al-Aẓīm Nadwī Maẓāhirī.
3. *Ta'athurāt*- Sufi Muḥammad Iqbāl.

PART I

Baṣā'ir aur 'Ibar

Shaikh Yūsuf Ludhiānwī

Allah ﷻ has made a beautiful program for his devout servants in the month of Ramadan. If anyone avails himself of the blessings of this month, it is the greatest means of achieving spiritual rectification. This is clearly elucidated in the Qur'an when Allah ﷻ says:

So that they may become al-Muttaqūn (pious and God-fearing)[33]

33 2:187.

This is precisely why our elders and shaikhs put much emphasis on this month. It is something one will find in the book *Akābir kā Ramaḍān*. There are still hundreds of people alive who have seen the spirit and liveliness of this month with Ḥaḍrat Thānwī, Shaikh al-Islām Shaikh Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī, and Shaikh Raipūrī. Hundreds of dhākirīn gathered in the khanqā of these elders, devoting their whole month in a blessed environment of recitation of Qur'an, ashgāl (meditative devotions), and isolation in order to gain closeness to Allah ﷻ.

For some time, it has been the routine of *Quṭb al-Aqṭāb* (pole of guidance), *Barakāt al-'Aṣr* (Blessing of the Age), Ḥaḍrat al-Shaikh al-Ḥājj al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kandhelwī Madanī [who incorporated the *nisba* (spiritual closeness to Allah ﷻ) of all the shaikhs of his time] to perform i'tikāf the whole month of Ramadan. Many devotees who wish to maximize the blessings of this month and avail themselves of Ḥaḍrat's blessed company gather together around him at his abode. In the foreword of *Irshād al-Mulūk,* Ḥaḍrat writes:

> For some thirty years, people have been coming here for this month, though these numbers have increased dramatically in the last two to three years. Last year, more than two hundred people sat in i'tikāf.

Since Ḥaḍrat spent most of his Ramadan in India, most of the Pakistani brethren were unable to benefit from this great blessing. But this year, Pakistan itself was honored to sponsor and become the venue for this beautiful blessing. This year, as the signs indicated, Ḥaḍrat decided to spend his Ramadan in Faisalabad and reignite the love of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the hearts of the people and rejoin them with their Creator. He left from Madina on Thursday, July 3rd, at 9:30 a.m. by Saudi Airlines. After a one hour stop in Riyadh, he reached Karachi at 4:30 p.m. and stayed in Makkī Masjid. On the 7th of July, Ḥaḍrat flew from Karachi at 8:30 a.m. [the plane stopped off in Multan for one hour] and

reached Faisalabad at 12 p.m. He stayed at Muftī Zain al-ʿĀbidīn's ʿDār al-ʿUlūm in Faisalabad. Many of the fortunate attendees made their presence before Ramadan. Aside from the hundreds of daily visitors and those that sat for iʿtikāf for less then ten days, approximately two hundred people sat from the beginning of Ramadan and five hundred in the last ten days.

My desire to perform iʿtikāf for the whole month of Ramadan was not fulfilled, but by the grace of Allah ﷻ I was able to sit for the last ten days of iʿtikāf. Though the aura of blessings, spirituality, and raḥma that envelop the environs of these blessed gathering is not usually felt by someone like myself, even I quickly became aware of these spiritual subtleties, though putting them in words is beyond my capacity.

The first thing that came to mind when I first came across this fascinating scene was of a river of *nūr* (light) and people drawing from this river according to however much is destined for them, some taking more, while others less.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ said of the dhākirīn,

لَا يَقْعُدُ قَوْمٌ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا حَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَنَزَلَتْ
عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

No such group sits to remember Allah ﷻ but the angels drape them, raḥma *envelops them, tranquility [sakīna] descends upon them and Allah ﷻ mentions them amongst those who are with Him.*[34]

As I witnessed the reality of this hadith with my own eyes, I began hoping for the forgiveness of Allah ﷻ for someone as unworthy as myself, sitting in this gathering. The blessings and spiritual effervesence reached their peak in Ramadan. The light of the daily dhikr and recitation of Qur'an was cascading upon the gathering and Ḥaḍrat's blessed company was rejuvenating hardened hearts.

34 Muslim, *Faḍl al-Ijtimāʿ ʿalā Tilāwat al-Qura'n*

The gathering was overwhelmed by love [of Allah ﷻ]. At the time, I wished from the bottom of my heart that the whole world could gather here and hoard this treasure of boundless blessings. Shaikh ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ logged Ḥaḍrat's program for this Ramadan . He writes:

Ifṭār ten minutes after adhān

The dining mats were laid out fifteen minutes after ṣalāt

Arrangements for seḥr and ifṭār for the people in iʿtikāf was in the masjid while everyone else ate in the courtyard of the masjid

The door of Ḥaḍrat's private quarters was opened at 8 p.m. and people came in for baiʿa. The crowd of people waiting for baiʿa began immediately after Maghrib. During this time, some students commenced their memorization of Qur'an and a large crowd formed for Ḥaḍrat to blow on water and salt.

The adhān of ʿIshā was at 9 p.m. and ṣalāt began at 9:30 p.m.

Shaikh Salmān [one of Ḥaḍrat's nephews] led tarāwīḥ, reciting clearly and at a fast pace.

At 10:30 p.m, shortly after ṣalāt, Sura Yāsīn was recited followed by a long duʿā [by Shaikh ʿAbd al- Ḥāfiẓ Makkī]. In the duʿā, he supplicated for the guidance of the whole umma, the best of the material world and the Hereafter, and for guidance and help from Allah ﷻ. On Ḥaḍrat's request, duʿā was always made for protection of the Blessed Precincts against all evils. After duʿā, Shaikh recited forty hadith of ṣalāt and salām and mesmerized the gathering with his reading. This was followed by a session of *Fadāīl-e- Durūd* until 11:30 p.m. Then, some people rested while others recited Qur'an. The courtyard of the masjid was kept empty for people who wished to worship or recite Qur'an. Voluntary ṣalāt were led in six or seven groups, though some recited on their own also.

Once the dining mats were laid out at 2 a.m. for seḥr, everyone was awakened at about 2:15 a.m. [tahajjud and seḥr

went together so to say]. After seḥr ended, the adhān of Fajr was called and ten minutes later Fajr ṣalāt began, during which the imam recited the *qunūt nāzila*[35] with special du'ās for the protection of the Blessed Precincts. After Fajr, newcomers or departees met with Ḥaḍrat; this lasted for ½ hour to 45 minutes [in the last few days the crowd was enormous]. After Fajr, most of the people in i'tikāf rested and then awoke at about 8:30 a.m. to carry out their individual devotions. At 11 a.m, Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangohī gave a talk for a ½ hour on matters of taṣawwuf and *sulūk*[36] [some transcribed these talks while others recorded them on their tape recorders].

The adhān of Ẓuhr was called at 2 p.m. and ṣalāt began at 2:30 p.m. Khatm-e-khawājagān was held immediately after Ẓuhr followed by a long du'ā [by Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ Makkī]. Those prescribed dhikr performed dhikr loudly while others read their aurād and individual daily devotions. 'Aṣr began at 5:30 p.m. followed by a reading session which continued until ½ hour before Maghrib. In the last ten days, *Ikmāl al-Shiyam* was started after *Irshād al-Mulūk* was completed. Then people prepared for Maghrib and sat to perform individual du'ā and *istighfār* until ifṭār. On Friday, the ṣalāt and salām,

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا وَمولاَنَا مُحَمَّدِ النَّبِيِّ الْاُمِّيِّ وَآلِهِ وَ سَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا

was recited eighty times before the reading session after 'Aṣr.

Additionally, devotees and others had the opportunity to meet with Ḥaḍrat after the five daily ṣalāts, after the gathering of bai'a after Maghrib, and after Fajr when departees and newcomers came to shake hands with him.

35 A du'ā the Blessed Prophet ﷺ made in Fajr ṣalāt after an incident in which seventy Ṣaḥāba رضي الله عنهم were massacred. This Sunna is put into practice whenever Muslims face hardship or suffer difficulty.

36 The spiritual path that is taken to achieve spiritual purification.

Also, if anybody wished to speak privately or ask him a question Ḥaḍrat met him by appointment. Shaikh Naẓīr Aḥmad, teacher of hadith in 'Dār al-'Ulūm, Faisalabad, organized two gathering in which Ḥaḍrat granted the attending scholars permission to narrate hadiths and then presented them with certificates.

After Fajr on Eid day, Ḥaḍrat treated everyone with dates and water and narrated the hadith *Musalsal bi Yaum al-Eid* and the hadith *Musalsal bi al-'Aswadain*[37] and then granted everyone permission to narrate the aforementioned hadiths.

The organizers and workers strove hard and with sincerity to serve and take care of the needs of the guests. They put their best efforts to ensure that the needs of the guest were met and that their stay was a comfortable one. They sacrificed their own rest for the comfort and rest of their guests, gaining the very special du'ās of Ḥaḍrat. In such a large gathering, you find every type of person, people with different temperaments and tastes. Under such circumstances, it is not easy to keep every person happy, but their dedication was truly exemplary. They cared for their guests graciously, openheartedly and with true love and sincerity.

Besides ifṭār, guests were offered a variety of curries and other delectables at both meal times. Judging by the different dishes on the mats, one would think the food had been prepared for v.i.p guests. I have attended many wedding banquets, but have never observed anything like the serenity, the honor and respect towards guests, and the sincerity and love of the hosts as on the mats of the elders.

37 *Musalsal bi Yaum al-Eid* - A tradition carried on amongst hadith scholars regarding a hadith which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ narrated on the day of Eid. The Ṣaḥāba ﷺ who heard that hadith from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ also narrated it on the day of Eid, and likewise this tradition continues to our time.

Musalsal bi al-'Aswadain - A tradition amongst hadith scholars regarding a hadith which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ narrated after which he served the Ṣaḥābī ﷺ/Ṣaḥāba ﷺ with dates and water. Then the same Ṣaḥābī ﷺ narrated that hadith to his students and served them with dates and water and likewise this tradition continues to our time.

From my hometown of Ludhiāna [Punjab, India], Hājī Ismā‘īl [aka Pehlwān] and Hājī Ibrāhīm came with wife and children to serve the guests of Ḥaḍrat for the whole month. At the ifṭār, he put butter-filled dates in the mouth of the guests with his own hands and followed up on their needs and presented them with fruits and sweets. May Allah ﷾ grant all of them the best of returns and bless them and increase them in their sincerity.

Our elders believed it was necessary for the scholars of the Din to purify their hearts of the filth resulting from evil traits and fill it instead with the remembrance of Allah ﷾ . Until this was done they believed that he would be deprived of the blessings of the knowledge of Dīn, and would not derive the maximum benefit from it. Such a scholar, in their view, was not credible and was wish-washy.

All of our elders followed the path of taṣawwuf and served their own shaikh in this path. Once they completed their sulūk, they became the epitome of Shari‘a and taṣawwuf in their words and state, externally and internally; and this was the trademark of our great elders. Their hearts glowed with the love of Allah ﷾, *‘ishq* (adoration) of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Ṣaḥāba رضي الله عنهم and the Auliyā’ Allāh who succeeded them. They were strict upon the Sunna and despised the innovations while the qualities of *iḥsān* (perpetual consciousness of Allah ﷾), closeness to Allah ﷾, and *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity) permeated their every deed. Self-effacement, humility, and self-annihilation [losing awareness of oneself] were their most outstanding qualities.

It says of Shaikh al-Hind [Maḥmūd Ḥasan] in *Tazkirat al-Rashīd*,

For the longest time, Ḥaḍrat's routine was to leave early in the morning for Gangoh by foot, pray Jumu‘a behind Ḥaḍrat Gangohī, and return at night. Since he had classes the next morning in Deoband, the strength of will that drove him to walk 28 miles in one day exemplifies his fervor and love for Dīn. When he came in Ḥaḍrat's gathering he sat down quietly amongst the people in the gathering. Once Ḥaḍrat Gangohī said of him: Maulwī Maḥmūd Ḥasan is the essence of knowledge.

The great Muftī, Muftī Shafī‘ writes in his biography of his father, “I am narrating something which my father Shaikh Yāsīn said that summarizes the piety, character, deeds, and life of our elders. He said:

> I have seen that time in ‘Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband, when everyone from the dean and principal down to the janitor and guard were all Auliyā’ Allāh and shaikhs who had attained complete closeness to Allah سبحانه وتعالى. It was ‘Dār al-‘Ulūm by day and a khanqā by night; you could hear the dhikr of Allah سبحانه وتعالى and the sound of the recitation of Qur’an coming from their homes in the last part of the night. [Ḥaḍrat Shaikh al-Ḥadīth]

Part 2
The Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat
Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Aẓīm Nadwī Maẓāharī

The dining mats were laid out a few minutes before sunset. Most people in i‘tikāf made their du‘ā during this time on the mats. The ifṭār and dinner of the people in i‘tikāf was in the courtyard of the masjid while everyone else ate outside the masjid. The organizers announced, “All guests [who are not in i‘tikāf] please sit on the mats outside the masjid.”

A small section of the masjid was designated for private guests while the larger portion was for the general public [i.e. those in i‘tikāf], though the food served in both areas was the same. A few minutes after sunset, it was announced through the speaker system that, “The time of ifṭār has begun, please break your fast.” One could hear people saying their du‘ā of ifṭār and breaking their fast. For ifṭār, the organizers prepared rice, sweetmeat, and sherbet daily while kabob and *jalebī* (type of sweet) were also served occasionally.

The adhān of Maghrib was prolonged so that the locals could finish their ifṭār and make it in time for the opening *takbīr*. Dinner was laid out after everyone had prayed the obligatory, Sunna and voluntary ṣalāt. People gradually gathered by the dining mats and

started eating. Dinner was formal with rice and meat and then sweet rice. The workers and organizers ate after the people in iʿtikāf and then wrapped up the mats.

Private Gathering After Maghrib and Baiʿa

The private gathering was ½ hour before ʿIshā. Ḥaḍrat meditated during this time in the gathering and those gathered also sat in meditation.

Newcomers came for baiʿa to Ḥaḍrat a short while after this gathering. Approximately thirty to forty people took baiʿa with Ḥaḍrat every day. Maulwī Iḥṣān al-Ḥaqq [teacher at Madrasa ʿArabiyya [Raiwind, Pakistan]] stood up on behalf of Ḥaḍrat and announced,

> Those who wish to take baiʿa with Ḥaḍrat take note of the following rules:
>
> 1 Please do not make baiʿa in blind imitation of others. Only take baiʿa if you have previously intended to do so.
>
> 2 Those who have already taken baiʿa with any of the righteous shaikhs who are alive should not take baiʿa. After this, those who wish to take baiʿa should quietly repeat the following after me.
>
> Then, Ḥaḍrat said the words of baiʿa and Maulwī Iḥṣān repeated it loudly for everyone to hear. The people taking baiʿa repeated the words quietly.
>
> The feelings that swept the heart at that time, the state of the heart and strength of īmān achieved, and the effect the words of baiʿa had on the heart can only be understood by those who took the baiʿa. They cried and wished for one thing only and that was to adhere to the Shariʿa. Some even lost control and broke down in tears.

The Words of Baiʿa

لااله الا الله محمد رسول الله – There is no God but Allah ﷻ and our leader, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is a true prophet of Allah ﷻ. We believe in

Allah ﷻ, in all His prophets, in all the books He revealed, on the Last Day, and upon destiny, and that fate good or bad, is all from Allah ﷻ.

We repent from disbelief, polytheism, innovation, from missing ṣalāt, from fornication, homosexuality, shaving the beard, lying, stealing, embezzling wealth, falsely accusing others, backbiting, and from every sin, major or minor.

We vow to never commit sin and that if it ever happens, to repent immediately. Oh Allah ﷻ! Accept our repentance, Oh Allah ﷻ! Accept our repentance. Make us amongst your true believers. Grant us the ability to gain Your pleasure and follow the way of Your prophet. We make the bai'a to Ḥaḍrat Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī at the hands of [Ḥaḍrat al-Ḥadīth] Zakariyyā.

After a short du'ā, it was announced that, "Those who have taken bai'a, should remember four things:

1 *Kalima ṭayyiba*
2 Ṣalāt and Salām
3 *Istighfār*
4. Third Kalima[38] every morning and night three times.

In addition, pray tahajjud, post-sunrise ṣalāt, pre-noon ṣalāt, voluntary ṣalāt, and be strict upon ṣalāt in congregation and upon reciting Qur'an. The booklet of prescribed daily devotions is available from the office for those who wish to do more. Fulfill these daily devotions as best as you can and if you every wish to ask anything, you may ask Muftī Zain al-'Ābidīn or Shaikh Iḥsān al-Ḥaqq in Raiwind.

The Booklet of Daily Devotions

It is customary for the shaikhs to prescribe daily devotions to their students at the time of bai'a. My Shaikh, Shaikh Muḥammad

38 *Subḥān Allāḥ wa al-Ḥamdu li Allāh wa lā Ilāha illa Allāh wa Allāh Akbar.*

Zakariyyā, would hand out a sheet of daily devotions [to be practiced consistently] for beginners when they took bai'a with him. This booklet is a copy of the daily devotions sheet with a few additions here and there. It should be read repeatedly and whatever can be easily adapted into one's routine should be started immediately. The shaikh should be informed of the daily devotions one has prescribed for oneself.

REMINDER

The following daily devotions are for every Muslim, whether he has taken bai'a with a shaikh or not.

PREFACE

It was my habit to verbally explain the preliminary practices to friends who wished to repent for their sins on my hands. This system led to certain misunderstandings amongst some people. To avoid this, I have been dictating all of the related points for several years. However even this method [of dictation and writing down of all points] has proved ineffective since many of the points were occasionally forgotten. Hence the necessity was felt of printing all of the relevant points for quick and easy reference. It will be advisable for all who receive this booklet to study it in my presence so as to ensure its correct interpretation and, where necessary, delete and add in accordance with one's individual situation.

ONE. The most important point is to refrain from all the evils from which one has repented, whether of a general or particular nature. However, if a mistake is made in this regard, one must repent and seek forgiveness at the earliest opportunity.

TWO (a) Special care must be exercised to fulfill others rights. Whether such obligations pertain to physical or monetary matters, they must either be promptly carried out or settled with the person concerned. It has to be taken into consideration that obligations towards people are far more serious than those towards the kind Creator. There will not be any salvation on the Day of Judgment without the settlements of other's rights. One may adopt any suitable method for this.

The personal or physical obligations include abstaining from degradation, insults, and abuses towards the scholars as well as other Muslims. Refraining from swearing, vulgar language, backbiting, and fabricating stories about others all falls under the category of human rights. Monetary rights of people include not holding back or depriving anyone of their rightful share or assets with the help of courts [where one resides] and abstaining from giving and taking bribery, etc.

Muslims, non-Muslim citizens [in an Islamic state] [*dhimmī*] and non-Muslims are all equal in this regard. In fact, the matter concerning non-Muslim citizens in these affairs is far more serious and delicate than that of Muslims. The wise and noble saying of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in relation to this is that, "I will make a demand in favor of the non-Muslim citizens on the Day of Judgement and stand against the person who oppresses any non-Muslim citizen, or defames and degrades him, or demands from him more than he can bear or do."[39]

This is truly a serious matter and a point worthy of concern. It would be a tragedy if one's own attorney and defendant becomes his adversary. My Pakistani friends must be very cautious regarding this, as the non-Muslims living in Pakistan are non-Muslim citizens in all respects.

Here, it is most important that all worldly affairs and transactions should be carried out with extreme care and tact in accordance with the Shari'a. Some people are careful about their worship but are not so particular about the Shari'a in their day-to-day transactions. We are as bound by the laws of Shari'a in our worldly affairs as we are in our worship.

Those who are learned should at all times carefully study the books containing rulings of the Shari'a which relate specifically to their occupations.

At this point, it must be understood that this humble servant does not reply to queries about any legal ruling. Any questions pertaining

39 Musnad al-Rabīʿ, *al-Ḥujja ʿalā Man Qāl*.

to legal rulings and fatwas should be addressed to the muftī. A reply card or envelope must be enclosed to receive back a reply.

TWO (b). Similarly, the obligations and duties towards Allah the Exalted must be performed with extreme care and regard. These include missed ṣalāt and fasts from the past, *kaffāra*[40], zakāt that is owed, and hajj, etc. It is wrong to think that all these are forgiven by repentance [*tauba*] only. Any type of delay because of neglectfulness can be forgiven by repentance; however the responsibility of discharging the actual obligation remains upon the person concerned. Overlooking and neglecting one's duties to Allah ﷻ is detrimental both in this world and the Hereafter and has been clearly explained in the books,

1 *Faḍā'il-e-Ṣalāt* (Virtues of Ṣalāt]
2 *Faḍā'il-e-Ṣadaqāt* [Virtues of Charity]
3 *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* [Virtues of Ramadan]
4 *Faḍā'il-e-Ḥajj* [Virtues of Hajj]

These books should be studied carefully and regularly.

THREE. Extreme care must be exercised in following the Sunna. One must constantly inquire of the practices of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, his behavior, diligence and conduct, service, worship and prayer, habits, and customs, etc. One should even be so keen as to find out what the Blessed Prophet ﷺ preferred in eating and drinking, and then try to establish them in his life. However, it must be noted that the Sunnas too difficult to adhere to due to weakness may be omitted. For instance, abstaining from foods for long periods of time, though one must regard such deeds with reverence. *Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī* or its Urdu translation *Khaṣā'il-e-Nabawiyy* will greatly help in this respect.

FOUR. One should completely abstain from disgracing, defaming, and disrespecting the friends [*auliyā Allāh*] of Allah ﷻ, for this

40 An expiation prescribed by Shari'a in lieu of certain mistakes in worship and in falling short in fulfilling oaths and vows.

is extremely injurious to spiritual progress. Disgracing, defaming, and disrespecting the friends of Allah ﷺ endangers one's īmān and puts a person in serious difficulties.

This rule should be strictly followed in regards to the Ṣaḥāba ﷺ, the great friends of Allah ﷺ, the *mujtahid* imams [four imams of Islamic jurisprudence] and hadith masters [*muḥaddithīn*]. It is not necessary to follow every one of them, as following a person is one thing and disrespecting or insulting him is another. One must always have great regard and respect for all such personalities. In this regard, my book *al-I'tidāl* and *Auliyā' Allāh kī Ahānat kā Wabāl* should be carefully studied.

FIVE. Whosoever is a ḥāfiẓ must make it a habit of reciting a minimum of three parts of Qur'an daily. A greater part of it, if possible, should be read in voluntary ṣalāt, otherwise one part twice or half a part five times, and then repeat it in voluntary ṣalāt. A non-ḥāfiẓ must read one part of Qur'an daily.

Those who cannot recite Qur'an should preferably set aside an hour or two daily to learn how to recite the Qur'an. This may easily be accomplished by reciting a small portion of the Qur'an to the local imam or ḥāfiẓ daily.

SIX. Sura Yāsīn should be recited once every morning after Fajr. The reward of this should be sent to all the elders of our line [Chishtiyya]. Sūrat al-Mulk should be recited every night after 'Ishā, and Sūrat al-Kahf every Friday before Jumu'a. When retiring to bed at night one should recite Sūrat al-Nās, al-Kāfirūn, al-Ikhlāṣ, and al-Falaq. Thereafter, one may dry spit [the blessings of these suras] on himself.

One should remember the shaikhs of our line when carrying out personal or monetary contributions. It is expected that one will benefit from this greatly.

Generally, sacrificial animals may be slaughtered on behalf of these shaikhs and on behalf of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, particularly during the time of hajj on 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhu al-Ḥijja [*Ayyām al-Naḥr*].

SEVEN. The voluntary ṣalāt are,

1 The four rak'a of post-sunrise ṣalāt
2 The eight rak'a of pre-noon salat
3 The six rak'a after Maghrib
4 The twelve rak'a of tahajjud

One should have the desire and intention to perform all these ṣalāt and to regularly perform those which one is able to carry out with ease.

EIGHT. One should give importance to fasting on the 9th and 10th of Muḥarram, the first nine days of Dhu al-Ḥijja [particularly the 9th], and the 15th of Sha'bān. If possible, one should fast during the 13th, 14th, and the 15th of every lunar month [*ayyām al-bīḍ*]. Fasting every Monday and Thursday is also desirable and recommended. This is not applicable to those occupied in important religious duties, such as religious instruction, tablīgh etc; they are allowed to avoid voluntary fasts if it effects their religious work [working in madrasas, in tablīgh etc.] but not to those involved in the non-religious life [jobs, business etc.] unless required by necessity.

NINE. One section of *Ḥizb al-A'ẓam*[41] should be recited daily. The scholars must recite these du'ās keeping in mind the meanings as though they are humbly beseeching Allah. Besides this, one should also memorize all the du'ās narrated in the hadiths which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ made daily at different times e.g. when making transactions, in different places and on different occasions e.g. the du'ās after meals, the du'ā when retiring to bed, etc.

TEN. One must regularly read *subḥān Allāh* 33 times, *al-ḥamd li Allāh* 33 times, and *Allāh Akbar* 34 times after every ṣalāt and at bed time.

Three tasbīḥ each of istighfār, ṣalāt and salām, kalima ṭayyiba and the third kalima should be recited daily morning and evening.

41 A book of supplications compiled from the Quran and Sunna. It is divided into seven sections for each day of the week.

Those who are occupied in religious work may read one tasbīḥ of each from these as their sacrifice and services are extremely important. All four of these kalimas are invaluable.

In addition to the religious benefits, they also benefit in the worldly life. A short discussion on this may be read in the book *Barakāt-e-Dhikr* (The Blessings of Dhikr).

ELEVEN. Any Urdu book written by (Shaikh al-Ḥadīth) Shaikh Zakariyyā should be read and studied regularly. If possible, such books may also be read out to friends. The latter, in many respects, is better than the former.

When one book is read and completed another book may be started. One should continue this practice since reading books of the pious substitutes for sitting in their presence.

One book may be preferable over another based on one's individual circumstances. This is something which can only be told in person after being informed of one's individual situation.

Besides these, *Ta'līm al-Ṭālib* and *Ta'līm al-Dīn* by Shaikh Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī and *Akābir kā Sulūk au Iḥsān*, *Faiḍ-e-Shaikh*, *Nisbat au Iḥsān*, and *The Reality of Bai'a* may also be studied. It is also good to read the books of other shaikhs, particularly those of our line and school of thought.

It is necessary that the dhākirīn study the books *Ikmāl al-Shiyam* and *Irshād al-Mulūk* deeply and with contemplation.

TWELVE. One must inform me of his personal progress monthly. He must mention how many of the recommended points he is acting upon. Do not include this booklet in the mail, but rather the relevant numbers should be mentioned respectively.

THIRTEEN. After carrying out the advice given above continuously and for at least six months one may request additional dhikr. The conditions before asking for more dhikr are:

1 There is fervent desire and demand [for more dhikr]
2 One must be mentally fit and also possess the physical strength to endure an increase in the dhikr.
3 One has adequate time for dhikr.

There is no harm in delaying the matter of taking up additional dhikr, but it is destructive to neglect or discontinue it once it is started.

FIFTEEN. The truth is that no matter how beautiful and promising the life of this world looks it is temporal, whereas the life of the Hereafter is everlasting. Therefore, it is necessary that the desire and concern of the Hereafter be greater than that for this world, and that death be remembered perpetually. The study of the book *Faḍā'il-e-Ṣadaqāt* will be a great aid in this regard.

Leisure and spare moments should always be devoted to the remembrance of Allah ﷻ, as these are the aids and crutches of the Hereafter. These are also means for blessing and peace of mind and heart in this world.

Certain times like the day of Jumu'a, the 9th of Dhu al-Ḥijja [in *'Arafāt* on Hajj], 15th of Sha'bān, the night of both Eids and the night of Qadr, and every odd night from the last ten days of Ramadan are special. In fact, the whole month of Ramadan is auspicious. This has been concisely dealt with in the book of this humble servant *Faza'il-e-Ramaḍān*. It is recommended to commence the study and reading of this book a few days before Ramadan and that it be carefully studied and read out to others during this sacred month. An earnest effort must be made to avoid wasting time during this month.

May Allah ﷻ, out of His infinite bounty, kindness and compassion grant this worthless and impure soul the privilege to carry out these gracious deeds. [End of Booklet]

'Ishā and Tarāwīḥ

The adhān of 'Ishā usually began immediately after bai'a. Some ran to perform ablution while others began voluntary ṣalāt. It was known that if anyone came a little late, he would not find space in the first few rows.

Ṣalāt began half an hour after adhān. After the obligatory ṣalāt, the imam prayed the emphasised Sunna and then tarāwīḥ was started. The recitation in tarāwīḥ was clear and according to the

rules of Quranic recitation [*tajwīd*]. The interval between each four rak'as was long enough for people to attend to their personal needs. Since only one and a quarter part was recited in tarāwīḥ this year, it took approximately one and a half hour to complete the ṣalāt.

Gathering After Tarāwīḥ

Once the witr was finished, people rushed and gathered at Ḥaḍrat's quarters. After tarāwīḥ, it was announced that, "We will be reciting Sura Yāsīn first, then du'ā, and then the reading session."

As per instruction, the ḥuffāẓ stayed seated and began reciting while non- ḥuffāẓ took a Qur'an and looked for a place to recite. Then, Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ supplicated loudly.

In his du'ā, he asked Allah تعالى for the success and protection of Muslims all around the world, adherence to the Shari'a, attaining the pleasure of Allah تعالى, following the Sunna of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, protection of the Blessed Precincts, Masjid al-Aqṣā, all the Muslim countries and that Allah تعالى bring back the spirit of Islam and create an Islamic environment in all of them. This du'ā was extremely powerful and moving.

After du'ā, the forty hadith of ṣalāt and salām was read followed by a reading session of *Akābir kā Ramaḍān* or *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* etc. or any other such book. This gathering ended after 30 to 40 minutes. The door to Ḥaḍrat's quarters closed and people either drank tea individually or rested.

Staying Awake at Night

A large number of people stayed awake the whole night. Small groups of two to four people either recited or listened to the Qur'an while others recited individually.

These groups where put in a bind when some people started coming to rest in the courtyard of the masjid. If they recited in the masjid, they disturbed the people [in i'tikāf] resting in the masjid and if they recited in the courtyard, they disturbed the people who had come to rest there.

In consideration of their need and due to lack of space, the organizers announced repeatedly, "Those who are in iʿtikāf should rest in their designated places, in the masjid or under the canopies. If people not in iʿtikāf wish to rest, they may go to the vacant dormitories of the school, the roof of the masjid, or on the mats laid out for this purpose outside the masjid." This rule brought relief to the groups who recited nightly in voluntary ṣalāt and others who stayed awake the whole night for recitation or other worship. The people who performed worship the whole night individually or collectively took up the whole courtyard of the masjid.

Some prayed individually while others in congregation. Some sat and recited, some cried and made duʿā fervently, and some were engrossed in dhikr and tasbīḥ. This continued until seḥr. The workers who prepared and arranged the food never slept throughout the night.

The Gathering of Advice

Ḥaḍrat did not attend this talk. One of his successors gave a talk for 30-40 minutes and ended it with a short duʿā. In the beginning, it was Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan who delivered simple, impromptu talks that captured the essence of Islam. His every word was noteworthy and full of wisdom.

Every day he discussed a new subject: following the Sunnas of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, adherence to the Shariʿa, Muslims do not lie, the virtues of Ramadan, the blessings of fasting and ṣalāt, punishment for ignorance towards the Dīn, having certainty in the Hereafter, punishment of the grave, the virtues and place of iʿtikāf, advising the hosts and guests etc. Generally, the talk was based on such topics.

Everyone is aware of the beautiful qualities and immense knowledge which Allah blessed Muftī Ṣāḥib with, which clearly manifested itself in these brief talks. Often he narrated incidents which had a profound spiritual effect on the listeners. Unfortunately, he became sick after a few days on the 6th of Ramadan 1400/1980.

On Ḥaḍrat's orders, Shaikh 'Abd al-'Halīm began giving the talks from Monday the 7th of Ramadan. His mains topics were taṣawwuf, good morals, love for the shaikh, purification of the heart from evil traits, avoiding backbiting and nonsense, valuing each and every second of this month, building good character, avoiding conversations during i'tikāf, gaining maximum benefit from the company and faiḍ of the shaikh, being grateful to Allah ﷻ for His great blessings and other such issues.

He often narrated the incidents of our elders and shaikhs, especially of Ḥaḍrat Shāh Waṣī Allāh and Ḥaḍrat Zakariyyā, and delighted the listeners with their beautiful sayings.

Nap and Ẓuhr Ṣalāt

After the talk and a short du'ā, those who woke early for worship took a short nap while others recited Qur'an, prayed voluntary ṣalāt, or read tasbīḥ. After one or two hours of rest, the adhān of Ẓuhr was called and people attended to their personal needs, then stood in the rows to pray the Sunna. The congregation was half an hour after adhān.

Khatm-e- Khawājagān, Du'ā and Dhikr

After ṣalāt, it was announced, "Those who know the method of the *khatm* [short for khatm-e-khawājagān] please move forward, while the rest read the ṣalāt and salām. The *khatm* will be followed by dhikr. Whoever has permission from their shaikh may perform the dhikr. Everyone else please complete their individual daily devotions."

Then the khatm-e-khawājagān begins. This is a tradition of our elders, its benefit being the likelihood of acceptance of du'ā. Usually, a date or tamarind seed or something similar is used for the khatm-e-khawājagān. [The method is as follows:]

- First, one recites ṣalāt and salām three times
- Recite لاحول ولاقوة الا بالله لاملجاً ولامنجاً من الله الا اليه counting each reading on a seed

- Recite Sūrat al-Inshirāḥ counting each reading on a seed.
- Repeat لاحول ولاقوة الا بالله لاملجاً ولامنجاً من الله الا اليه, each reading counted on a seed.
- Complete the *khatm* with ṣalāt and salām three times
- After the *khatm,* Shaikh ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Makkī read the duʿā aloud as those praying said *āmīn*. After duʿā, everyone, while in the state of ablution, took out their tasbīḥs and faced the qibla. The gathering of dhikr was attended by people from the general public, murīds, devotees, successors and elders. Most of the people were those who performed the twelve tasbīḥ.

The method of twelve tasbīḥ [also called *dawāzda* tasbīḥ] is as follows:

- Sit cross-legged while in the state of purity and facing the qibla
- Read the ṣalāt and salām eleven times and Sūrat al-Ikhlās twelve times beginning each time with *bismi Allāh*, sending the reward upon the elders of the four lines [Chishtiyya*, Suharwardiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qādiriyya*]
- Say *lā Ilāha illa Allāh* 200 times. Complete the kalima after every ten times [i.e., read the whole kalima]
- Say *illa Allāh* 400 times
- Say *Allāhu Allāh* 600 times
- Say *Allāh* 100 times

ʻTwelve tasbīḥʼ is the Chishtiyya term for this methodology otherwise it actually comes to thirteen tasbīḥ.

The whole masjid resounded with the chanting of dhikr at this time. The dhākirīn chanted the dhikr fervently and impassionately, deeply engrossed in *lā ilāha illa Allāh, Allāhu Allāh,* and *illa Allāh*. The dhikr of some was loud and forceful. This dhikr gathering continued for approximately one hour after which most went to sleep for a short while. After they awoke, they either recited Qur'an or completed their aurād. Within this time the adhān of ʿAṣr was called and people stood in the rows to pray their Sunna. Ṣalāt

began half an hour after adhān. It was announced immediately after ṣalāt that, "Everyone remain seated, move forward after the du'ā." But still, people rushed to gather around Ḥaḍrat's quarters and complete their du'ā by his place after *taṣbīḥ* of *subḥān Allāh* [33 times], *al-Ḥamd li Allāh* [33 times], and *Allāh Akbar* [34 times].

The Gathering after 'Aṣr

Then, Shaikh Mu'īn al-Dīn read *Akābir kā Sulūk au Iḥsān, Muḥabbat, Faiḍ-e-Shaikh, Irshād al-Mulūk* and others books of this nature in the reading session while the gathering listened quietly and attentively.

The gathering after 'Aṣr was year round with Ḥaḍrat. The only difference being that people were permitted to shake hands and make bai'a with Ḥaḍrat in the gathering in other months while the time for bai'a [and shaking hands] in Ramadan was after the gathering ended.

Ḥaḍrat never cancelled the gathering after 'Aṣr. Regarding these he himself has written in many places:

> It is my routine for the past thirty years to listen to the biographies of my elders, their sayings, or anyone of their books [not academic] in the gathering after 'Aṣr. The reason being that I receive an average of thirty to forty visitors [aside from the locals] everyday. I don't know how to deliver talks or advise people and there is no point wasting time talking about useless things. I thought it best that they hear the beautiful sayings of our elders, those who have been blessed with strict adherence to the Sunna. Their sayings are like stringed pearls while their silence opens the door to spiritual progression and reading their biographies increases the īmān.

Ḥaḍrat spoke highly of his elders but if one sat in Ḥaḍrat's own gathering he would not see any difference in his gatherings. Those who sat in his gathering felt a change of heart. When his *Faḍā'il* books, which are an antidote for darkened and

rusted hearts, were read aloud, the hearts of listeners became illuminated.

This Ramadan, in the gathering after ʿAṣr, one could see that everyone was entranced in the reading session. Sometimes, if a heartrending incident came up, some people, unable to control their inner state, cried out and shuddered.

The reading session continued until a short time before ifṭār. The people sitting in iʿtikāf and the guests that had arrived earlier supplicated while newcomers wished to see and meet with Ḥaḍrat. Sometimes they insisted and argued with the organizers to be allowed to meet with Ḥaḍrat. Since this was against the rules, they would be patiently and respectfully told that the time for handshaking is only after Fajr. If they became unruly [as was the case many times], it would take time to calm the situation.

The hosts and organizers quickly laid down the dining mats and arranged the food on the mats professionally. People sat in rows on the mats, supplicated until ifṭār and then broke their fast at ifṭār.

PART 3
Ta'aththurāt (Impressions)

Taḥdīth bi al-Niʿma [A postscript to the book Faiḍ-e-Shaikh]

Sufi Muḥammad Iqbāl Madanī

What did I get from Ḥaḍrat's company in Ramadan of 1400/1980?

This year, many fortunate and worthy people progressed amazingly, as has been already mentioned by Shaikh Yūsuf Ludhiānwī in his article in *Bayyināt* magazine and as has been witnessed by hundreds of people present at that time. However, what did I gain from it? Shaikh ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Makkī asked to me to write something with the hope that people may benefit from it.

One of the many books read in the reading session was my own book *Faiḍ-e-Shaikh*. One of the scholars present in the reading session of my book came to me later and said, "Your book was excellent except for one thing. You wrote that you have been

associated with Ḥaḍrat for over 35 years and now spend most of your time in his company. Despite that, you mentioned that you could not gain benefit from him. This last sentence may make people lose hope that if one person couldn't gain anything after 35 years, what are we going to gain in a short period of time. I understand that you said this in humility, but the problem is that if anyone [of the listeners] takes it seriously he will put himself in harm." I began to cry and responded, "Shaikh, I am sitting in the masjid; I am in i'tikāf and am fasting, do you think I am so bad that I would lie while in this state. I swear by the name of Allah ﷻ, that I have written the truth and am not trying to be humble." The reality is that I did not benefit because I did not fulfill the conditions that are necessary for one to benefit from his shaikh. Remember, this is nothing new. I even wrote that once Shaikh Sher Muḥammad asked Shaikh Sahāranpūrī, "Why are the children of shaikhs and scholars [like myself since I have had longtime relations with the scholars] deprived of the benefits of this path?" He replied, "The children of the shaikhs think themselves big sufis once their fathers pass away and as for the scholars, they become oblivious to everything after gaining knowledge of the Dīn." Once they learn the Dīn of Allah ﷻ, they become complacent and ignorant of yet another path they must tread which is crucial to their success. If they do not traverse this path, their knowledge of Dīn becomes a tribulation for them and their actions meaningless and futile like a peel thrown in the refuse. When a person does not feel and understand the importance of something, how is he going to produce the will to do it? Without the will to do something [to attain the objective of this path] not even a shaikh's wife or son can achieve anything, let alone a murīd spending 10-20 years with his shaikh.

I never understand how scholars can be so lax in this matter when they know [and even teach] the hadith of Jibrā'īl ﷺ[42]

42 Abū Huraira ؓ narrates that, "once the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was sitting

in which it states that iḥsān is the highest and final level of Dīn after īmān and Islam. This is something no Muslim can deny, since it is a rigorously authenticated hadith from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. If one wants to gain īmān , he must first learn and then believe in the prerequisites of īmān . Likewise, to practice Islam one must first learn the pillars of Islam and then one begins to pray ṣalāt, bow [*rukū'*] and prostrate [*sajda*]. So, if one is to gain the level of iḥsān he must first gain knowledge of iḥsān, then strive to attain it. I don't understand how scholars are so complacent in the matter of iḥsān, as if to say that they have already achieved it, when in fact they haven't even gained knowledge about iḥsān.

This issue, which clouded my understanding for sometime, was finally resolved for me by the blessings of my shaikh. The issue is that knowledge of an action and the action itself are two very different things. And then actions are themselves of two types. One is external action such as ṣalāt and fasting. The knowledge of this type of action falls under the category of jurisprudence. The second type of action is internal action [īmān , iḥsān, sincerity, love, humility, trust in Allah ﷻ etc.] and falls under the subject of taṣawwuf. The means of gaining knowledge of both types [external and internal] are the mind and the heart, the only difference [between the two] being the actual manifestation of this knowledge. Knowledge of the external actions manifest in the limbs, making it easy to recognize the difference between one who has only attained the knowledge [of the external actions] and one who has actually achieved the action itself. The example for this

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amongst the people when Jibrā'īl ﷺ came upon him and asked him, 'what is īmān?' The Blessed Prophet ﷺ replied, 'that you believe in Allah ﷻ, His angels, that you will meet Him, in His prophet, and that you believe in the Resurrection. He asked, 'what is Islam?' He replied, 'Islam is that you worship and do not liken anyone to him, establish the ṣalāt, pay the zakāt, and fast in Ramadan.' Jibrā'īl ﷺ asked, 'what is iḥsān?' the Blessed Prophet ﷺ replied, 'that you worship Allah ﷻ as if you see Him, and that if you cannot see Him, that He sees you…'" [Bukhārī, *Su'āl Jibrā'īl ﷺ al-Nabiyy ﷺ*]

would be that a person who knows the rulings of ṣalāt but does not pray is never deceived into thinking he prays only because he has knowledge of the rules of ṣalāt.

On the other hand, an internal action manifests itself in the same place where its knowledge is stored- the heart. This is why many people, even if intelligent and well educated, were deceived into thinking they had achieved perfection in the internal actions because they had complete knowledge of the internal actions. For example, it is known about Ibn 'Alī Sīnā [Avicenna] that because of his knowledge regarding internal actions and their deeper aspects, he thought he had attained perfection of the internal actions, though in fact he was far from this. This is the same deception the scholars who teach the hadith of Jibrā'īl ﷺ fall into, as do those who learn some aspects of taṣawwuf from the shaikhs and write articles and books on the subject. There are other reasons why people fall under this deception. A few are mentioned below:

1. The first reason, as mentioned previously, is that knowledge of the internal actions and the place where that knowledge becomes action is one and the same. Also, the first stage of īmān by which one enters into the folds of Islam is inclusive of the highest level of iḥsān. In the hadith of Jibrā'īl ﷺ, the highest level of īmān is mentioned distinctly in the following aya of Qur'an under the word *āminū*,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ

Shāh 'Abd al-Qudūs translated this as, "*Oh People of īmān, gain certitude [yaqīn].*"

As the highest and lowest level of the knowledge of the internal action of īmān derive from the same source, likewise their manifestations also seem the same; even though in actuality the difference between a person who possesses the highest level of īmān and the one who possesses the lowest is greater than the difference between a mountain and a granule.

For example, if one observes two Muslims, one who has attained the level of iḥsān and the other who possesses only the very base level, and both are giving one rupee in charity, the observer will see no difference in their action, except for the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said that a *mudd* [1.7 lbs] spent by a Ṣaḥābī ﷺ in the path of Allah ﷻ weighs more than a mountain of gold spent by anyone else.

2. The second reason scholars are deceived into thinking they have achieved iḥsān is because of their religious work, instruction and propagation of Dīn. Scholars quickly rise to positions of fame and are given titles like Muftī, ʿAllāma, and Sufi, etc. Even righteous shaikhs will pay them respect in following of the Sunna of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that, "He respected the leader of every people"[43] and others such similar reasons. Though many times this show of respect is actually an allusion to a spiritual condition [in the scholar]. For example, if our shaikh addresses someone in his letter with *mukarram* (my respected friend), or *muḥtaram* (my honorable friend) instead of *azīzam* (my dear), it indicates that he is displeased with them. These are the ways of the *muṣliḥīn* (the rectifiers, the shaikhs). Therefore, Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī feared the affections of his shaikh. Sometimes, he clasped his hands in front of him and begged him, "Ḥaḍrat! Because of your affections and love for me I begin to think you have written me off as unworthy." Ḥaḍrat responded, "No maulwī ṣāḥib, I am never forgetful of you." There are many incidents of his humility in *Āp Bītī*.

3. The third reason is that one sees the fruits of his efforts and religious work in Dīn and sees himself rising in position and respect; and the truth is that such a person [who dedicates his life to the work of Dīn] is truly most deserving of respect, but with the condition that it is done with humility and in servitude to Allah ﷻ. But in order for one to gain this humility and servitude to Allah ﷻ he must first eliminate

43 Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī, *Yakhzinu Lisānahū*.

> the self under someone. Instead of becoming someone, he must become no one, which quite naturally is a most difficult task. This is why the self [*nafs*] makes excuses to avoid this path. Sometimes, it objects to the innovations and carnal acts of false claimants to shaikhhood [*pīrs*] and compares it to all the good work he is doing for Dīn. As a result he is unable to reflect on the necessary and good traits he himself is deprived of. Such a deception should not entrap a scholar, especially when he knows how much the Qur'an and Sunna emphasise the importance of humility and the dangers of arrogance. It is said in *Imdād al-Sulūk* that the knowledge which takes a person from humility into arrogance and from obscurity to fame is the same knowledge which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ sought refuge from. Despite their knowledge and greatness, our elders viz. Ḥaḍrat Nānautwī, Ḥaḍrat Gangohī felt the need for a shaikh. In fact, even in juridical matters they followed the *mujtahid* imams. Though it is not impossible juristically and rationally to achieve this objective oneself, it is generally difficult in this day and age. However, propriety [*adab*] and love for the shaikh is absolutely essential for this path, a love by which one feels desirous of his beloved. One of the main elements of love for the shaikh is unconditional submission [*inqiyād*].[44]

To derive full benefit from one's shaikh, I will only mention one of the conditions of unconditional submission so that every murīd can judge for himself if he is truly a murīd or not. The definition of a murīd is one who is selfless.

Imam Ḥaḍrat Mujjadid Alf-i-Thānī writes in one of his letters,

> Only those murīds have the ability to derive the full benefit of the path of prophethood and friendship [*wilāya*] whose

44 Complete subservience of the mind and heart to the Sheikh. An oft-quoted example of this quality is like that of a deceased person in the hands of the one who washes and prepares him for the grave.

> intellect is subjugated through complete surrender of the self to their shaikh.

For example, if a man is standing in front of the murīd and the shaikh tells the murīd to grab both his hands, the murīd must grab both his hands. In fact, if the shaikh tells him to grab the third hand the murīd must put his thoughts aside and stretch out his hand to grab the third hand. No one should think this is sufistic talk as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself taught unconditional submission and every Ṣaḥābī ؓ, in accordance with their personal effort, attained some degree of this quality. The less unconditional submission one had, the more deprived he was. Therefore, in one narration by Abū 'Ubaida ؓ in *Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī* he says,

I cooked some food for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. I knew the Blessed Prophet ﷺ liked shank so I presented him with shank first. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ asked for another and I gave him another. When he asked for another, I said, "Oh Blessed Prophet ﷺ, a goat only has two shanks." The Blessed Prophet ﷺ replied, "I swear by the One in whose life is my hands! If you had stayed quiet, the more I asked for, the more that would have come out from the pot."[45]

Ḥaḍrat narrates the opinion of Manāwī in his commentary [of *Shamā'il*] that, "In reality, this was a great blessing of Allah ﷻ. If he had complete unconditional submission in the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, pieces of shank would have come out from the pot for as long as he asked, but as he became apprehensive [which was not suited to the occasion], the special blessing of Allah ﷻ was removed."

The channel of the faiḍ and divine blessings of Allah ﷻ is the shaikh who takes the place of the prophet. Any wavering in the murīd's unconditional submission or any such thing that appears as an objection can be cause for the blessings and special bounties to cease. Therefore, he who takes his knowledge as ignorance and his personal views as darkness before he arrives at his shaikhs, will take his full share of the shaikh's faiḍ . If he comes to the

45 Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī, *mā Jā' fī Idāmi Rasūl Allāh* ﷺ

shaikh with firm belief in his own knowledge and views, he will not get any share of the shaikh's faiḍ , no matter how great the shaikh is.

May Allah ﷻ have mercy on me. I understood the answer to my objection and realized my own reality this Ramadan.

It was due to this unquestioning belief of unconditional submission that Abū Bakr ﵁ became *al-Ṣiddīq al-Akbar* and the lack of it that Abū Jahl became accursed.

It is the way of Allah ﷻ that the very group whose mission in life was dedication to the Dīn, and thus was most deserving and worthy of the company of the shaikhs, are farthest away from them due to the aforementioned reasons. This is why it has been observed that the shaikhs are unhesitant in accepting the general public in bai'a but extremely precautious about accepting scholars [in bai'a] who are well-respected in society. In fact, they may even wish to take them in bai'a but will never say or emphasize its need in front of them. In this regard, one can read the thought-provoking discussion between Ḥaḍrat Raipūrī and Shaikh Manẓūr Nu'mānī which he [Shaikh Manẓūr Nu'mānī] narrates in his book "*What is Taṣawwuf*"? Our Ḥaḍrat's response to such people [scholars of high-standing living under this deception] who wished take bai'a with him was, "Your intention is great but your choice is wrong. So-and-so amongst the elders are alive, you may take bai'a to whomever you feel closest to amongst them." There is still another group amongst the scholars who do bai'a and busy themselves in dhikr and ashgāl, but do not fulfill the condition of unconditional submission to their shaikh. They can never be made aware of their self-deception and deprivation and usually wind up blaming the shaikh for their lack of progress. They become jealous of people who take bai'a with the same shaikh but who progress tremendously because of their unquestioning belief and unconditional submission to him.

May Allah ﷻ by His grace and blessing save us from the deception of Satan and the self and grant us His love and pleasure.

ONE BENEFIT OF THE GATHERING IN FAISALABAD IN RAMADAN OF 1400/1980

As an expression of my gratefulness to Allah ﷻ, I would like to mention one more important point since Allah ﷻ blessed me with the opportunity to be in Faisalabad this Ramadan .

The month of Ramadan is the best time for the practice and devotions of taṣawwuf. The practice of 40 days of iʿtikāf adopted from the elders [which is now in practice in Sahāranpūr and other places in India] had not yet been established in Pakistan. The lofty objective [the revival of dhikr of Allah ﷻ in the umma] of spreading this practice to other places in the world (using the Ramadan of Faisalabad as a model) was why Ḥaḍrat left Madina to spend his Ramadan in iʿtikāf in Faisalabad [despite his deteriorating health and weakness].

When the schools are in need of help or aid, they call upon the people and take help from them. Likewise is the case with any other work of Dīn. The nature of the khanqā system runs contrary to this as taṣawwuf is about eliminating the self and being vigilant over ones internal state. This is why we never see anyone calling others to open their khanqā. For this reason, Shaikh Yaḥyā and I decided to establish a model of the khanqā system in Karachi, as there has been one for the people of Punjab in Faisalabad, and as many of Ḥaḍrat's successors reside in Karachi. If these scattered lights and powerhouses gather together they can establish a khanqā system there. We shared our idea with Shaikh ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ, who gave his full support and called Shaikh Al-Ḥāj Muḥammad Zubair, his brother Muftī Shāhid, and Shaikh Yūsuf Ludhiānwī to gather in one place for dhikr. In this setting, they would be able to guide and help others in the path of sulūk, establish the system of baiʿa and spread the dhikr of Allah ﷻ. They would have one combined khanqā like the khanqā of Thāna Bhawan where the successors of Miāńjī Nūr Muḥammad, Ḥaḍrat Hājī Ṣāḥib, Ḥaḍrat Ḥāfiẓ Ḍāmin,

and Shaikh Muḥammad Thānwī[46] lived in one place. Their khanqā was called the store of *ma'rifa* (gnosis of Allah ﷻ). People came and took bai'a with whomever they felt comfortable with. Every one of the three poles [Ḥājī Ṣāḥib, Ḥaḍrat Ḥāfiẓ Ḍamin, and Shaikh Muḥammad] thought nothing of themselves and held the other in the highest regard. As Syed al-Ṭā'ifa Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Ṣāḥib said to Shaikh Rashīd Gangohī, "Do not debate with Shaikh Muḥammad, he is one of our elders." And the statement of Ḥāfiẓ Ḍāmin is known. He gestured to a newcomer [to come to him] then said, "If you have any juridical questions, go to the big Shaikh [pointing towards Shaikh Muḥammad] over there, if you want to take bai'a, al-Hāj Ṣāḥib is sitting right over there, and if you want to smoke a *huqqa* then you can hang out with your good 'ol friends [referring to himself]."

Anyhow, they took up the idea and started the gathering of dhikr. The memorial of our elders, Jāmia Islāmia Binnorī town, became the blessed venue for this gathering. Allah ﷻ willing, this gathering will be a source of success for this school and will help protect it against evils [*fitna*] in these trying times.

On his return journey from Ḥijāz, Ḥaḍrat stayed in Karachi for two days. He was overjoyed by this program and told many people about it. During his stay, he announced after the bai'a, "Those who wish to do more than the prescribed daily devotions should know that my friends gather every Friday from 'Aṣr until Maghrib during which time the gathering of dhikr is held and the books of taṣawwuf are read in the Dār al-Ḥadīth in Jāmia Islāmia, Binnorī Town. Everyone should try to partipate. You may obtain your copy of the booklet of daily devotions from there, and if you have any questions, you may ask my friends."

May Allah ﷻ make this khanqā a success and allow it to flourish through the humility and taqwā that reflects the humility and taqwā of our elders [humility and taqwā are essential for high spiritual

46 The spiritual predecessors of the school and elders of Deoband.

rank and when working together]. May Allah ﷻ also grant people the ability to gain maximum benefit from this khanqā.

CHAPTER NINE

The Last Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat in South Africa 1401/1981

ḤAḌRAT SPENT THE last Ramadan of his blessed life in South Africa. Muftī Shāhid, [successor of Ḥaḍrat] logged Ḥaḍrat's journey and Ramadan in South Africa, which has been published in the book 'Account of Ḥazrat Shaikh's travels to South Africa and England.' Shaikh Yūsuf Ludhiānwī wrote a foreword of this log, both of which are being reproduced below for the benefit of the readers.

FOREWORD

Shaikh Yūsuf Ludhiānwī

Ḥaḍrat Khawāja Farīd al-Dīn Ganj Shakkar advised Ḥaḍrat Khawāja Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā' at the time he granted him successorship:

"Allah ﷻ has blessed you with true knowledge, a great mind, and deep love [*'ishq*]. Whoever is granted these three things is able to properly uphold the responsibilities of the shaikhs."

He then said:

"You will be a tree that the creation of Allah ﷻ will take shade under. Continue to work hard to increase your progression on the spiritual path."

The whole life of the Quṭb al-Aqṭāb, *Murshid al-'Ālam* (Guide of the world), Ḥaḍrat al-Ḥāj al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Zakariyyā Ṣiddiqī Kāndhelwī from childhood to adulthood and from adulthood to old age was an embodiment of knowledge, intelligence, extreme

love and spiritual exertions [*mujāhadāt*]. The intensity of his reclusion, isolation from the material world, and spiritual exertions peaked in Ramadan to a level that is unimaginable in this day and age and is only to be found in the accounts and lives of the elders and predecessors [*salaf*].

In this era, the rise and spread of hedonism has shaken the belief of Muslims. Love for good deeds has left the hearts and people are completely ignorant of the sweetness of *ikhlāṣ,* certitude, iḥsān, sulūk, and dhikr of Allah ﷾. As the khanqās became abandoned, the umma became deprived of closeness to Allah ﷾, and as a consequence, the difference between Muslims and non-Muslims in appearance, actions and deeds, beliefs and disposition became blurred.

Our state of affairs today is enough to make any concerned Muslim restless. Only Allah ﷾ knows what went through Ḥaḍrat's heart as one who embodied the spirituality of the elder shaikhs and was their successor and true representative. When he saw decadence in the umma, as a true experienced [spiritual] physician, he immediately diagnosed the root causes and knew how to relieve the problem. Therefore, in the last few years of his life, he made it his one mission in life to revive the name of Allah ﷾ and rejuvenate the darkened hearts with His love. This was the only cure to the sickness and what he had set out to do on his travels. It was the crux of all his gatherings and the only thing he discussed in his circles. In his letters and correspondence with others, he continually emphasized that the gatherings of dhikr be started everywhere and that more and more people be brought into these gatherings.

The words, *"That You may become Al-Muttaqūn"* embodies the reason for fasting in the month of Ramadan and proves that the syllabus of Ramadan is the most complete and comprehensive for attainment of taqwā and devotion. This is a point Allah ﷾ made clear to Ḥaḍrat, which is why he spent the month of Ramadan in iʿtikāf. Thousands of people came from different places to sit in his company and illuminate their own hearts. Only Allah ﷾ knows how many people left Ramadan with the *nisba* of Allah ﷾ through

Ḥaḍrat's effort. For many years, it was Ḥaḍrat's routine to perform i'tikāf in the month of Ramadan in Sahāranpūr until his migration to Madina. Then he performed i'tikāf there also. However, Allah ﷾ put it in Ḥaḍrat's heart to revive the gatherings of dhikr of Allah ﷾ everywhere by spending his Ramadan in different countries around the world. After a place was designated through istikhāra and consultation [with others], it came to life with fervor for attaining the closeness of Allah ﷾ and radiance of īmān .

Ḥaḍrat spent his last Ramadan in South Africa and then traveled to England, the details of which have been narrated by Ḥaḍrat's successor, Muftī Shāhid, and his close assistant Shaikh Najīb Allāh in this book. We thought the book would be published in Ḥaḍrat's lifetime but fate had it otherwise. Ḥaḍrat's shadow was lifted from his devotees and now the eyes long to see the scenes of Ḥaḍrat's Ramadan. The details of Ḥaḍrat's travels and his daily devotions during the month of Ramadan as mentioned in this book will be an excellent guide for those who wish to follow Ḥaḍrat's footsteps and continue Ḥaḍrat's legacy and his methodology. In this way, all of the efforts of his successors and helpers are a permanent means of reward for Ḥaḍrat. May Allah ﷾ raise his status and may He diffuse the love of Allah ﷾ which Ḥaḍrat spread throughout his life.

THE RAMADAN OF SOUTH AFRICA

Muftī Muḥammad Shāhid

THE GREATEST OBJECTIVE

As most readers know, when Islam was spreading [throughout the lands] during the first century and people flocked towards the Dīn of Allah ﷾ the predecessors became concerned about two issues: imparting the knowledge of Dīn to the newly-converted masses and two, caring for their spiritual needs. In terms of the former, they established the schools that eventually produced thousands of jurists [*fuqahā*] and hadith masters. While they gained knowledge of the Dīn, the predecessors arranged for the latter through the khanqās and centers of dhikr so that good deeds were imbued with

sincerity and purity and became worthy of acceptance in the court of Allah ﷻ. If their spiritual needs were not fulfilled, it was most likely that the deeds, though performed correctly, would be void of taqwā, spirit and righteousness, resulting in their worship being rejected [May Allah ﷻ protect us all].

Therefore, the shaikhs of taṣawwuf opened centers [commonly known as khanqās] for the spiritual development and rectification of the students on this path and devoted their lives to this cause. Not only thousands but hundreds of thousands of people came to these enlightened places and left with illuminated hearts. They were treated for their spiritual sicknesses and evil traits in these spiritual hospitals and returned home imbued with the most beautiful traits and the best of characters. Elders like Junaid, Shiblī, Ghazālī and Busṭāmī[47] were born from these khanqās, who themselves helped guide and rectify the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people. The world was illuminated by these ascetics whose hearts burned with the love of Allah ﷻ. The darkness of disbelief and falsehood was removed and only Allah ﷻ knows how many hearts became radiated with the love of Allah ﷻ through their efforts.

The scholars, jurists, and hadith masters came to the doorsteps of these saints of truth and purity, who then transmitted the love of Allah ﷻ into their hearts and filled them with love of Allah ﷻ.

For as long as the love of Allah ﷻ was inherited in our umma, the khanqā and centers of dhikr continued to thrive and illuminate the hearts of men. The umma was adorned with the taqwā of Allah ﷻ, austerity, fear of Allah ﷻ, sincerity, righteousness and servitude. The unforgettable scenes of love of Allah ﷻ and sacrifice for the sake of Allah ﷻ were commonplace. However, as the umma became indifferent towards this major pillar of Dīn, [as happened with other pillars of Dīn] spending time in the khanqā became a 'waste of time', and those who devoted their lives to this cause became the butt of jokes and criticism, the umma began shedding these beautiful traits. As it became engulfed by the material world

47 Great mashā'ikh of taṣawwuf of the past

and its false desires, it turned its back on the Creator. *Be not like those who forgot Allah ﷻ and He made them forget their own souls.* The gates of evil creaked open wide and corruption descended into the cities, towns, homes, and even religious centers [schools] and darkness enveloped everything.

These circumstances made Ḥaḍrat restless. As an inheritor of the most pure inheritance [the nisba of Allah ﷻ] and a keeper of the most important trust [the purity and nisba of his elders] his restlessness was only expected. He saw the umma fulfilling the basic obligations of Dīn but being deprived of the spirit, fruit, and spiritual benefits of these obligations and good deeds. He understood that the root cause for this downfall was our indifference to the dhikr of Allah ﷻ, which was a consequence of abandonment of the khanqā system and our ignorance towards taṣawwuf [one of the main pillars of the Dīn of Allah ﷻ]. Only this pillar of Dīn rectifies the inner [spiritual] and outer [physical], and imbues the qualities of sincerity, righteousness, sacrifice and compassion, benevolence, love for the creation, lack of pretension, cheerfulness, contentment and austerity, dependence on Allah ﷻ and other such beautiful traits while cleaning out jealousy, hatred, begrudgement, and other such evil traits. This is the greatest tragedy which this umma continues to suffer today.

It is important to remember that Ḥaḍrat saw the spiritual hubbub of the khanqās before the time of the partition. Memories of those scenes still bring tears to his eyes and when he talks about them he is overcome by a certain state. He remembers how the hearts were illuminated, purification of the heart was revived, and lives were changed in these khanqās. All these memories made Ḥaḍrat restless. Finally, the need and importance of these khanqās established themselves so strongly in his heart that he made it his mission in life to establish a khanqā everywhere. He understood that until the umma illuminates its heart with the dhikr of Allah ﷻ and reconnects with Allah ﷻ the umma cannot bear the fruit of its good deeds. This is especially important for the scholars who are busy in the work of Allah ﷻ i.e. until they put their minds to

purifying their hearts they cannot be saved from evil. Then, he saw a dream that deeply troubled him and confirmed the demand for khanqās in his mind.

Ḥaḍrat relates:
Once, I saw the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in my dream and Ḥaḍrat Gangohī sitting next to him. He complained to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, "Zakariyyā wishes to meet you, Oh Blessed Prophet ﷺ but I wish that he be used some more for the work of Dīn." The Blessed Prophet ﷺ replied, "Yes, he wants to come, but I also wish that he be used some more." After this dream, I was confused that I am nothing. I wasted my whole life, what am I going to do now. And then who am I to wish to meet the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and with what face am I going to bring myself in front of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. But a few days later, I remembered my uncle's [Shaikh Ilyās] story that while in Madina, he received a message from the blessed grave [*rauḍa*], "Go back, you are to be used for some important work." My uncle said, "For many days, I was extremely anxious that I don't know how to talk or deliver speeches and am so weak, what work is to be taken from me." After a few days, when Shaikh Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī's older brother Shaikh Syed Aḥmad saw him upset, he said, "Why are you so upset, you weren't told to go and work, but that work will be taken from you. He who takes work from His servants will take it Himself." After this, my uncle was relieved. Shortly thereafter, he returned and the work of tablīgh began in the Indian subcontinent, which eventually spread throughout the world.

I thought, "The same goes for me. I was not told to go do something, but that work will be taken from me. I thought about it for a long while. Finally, it came to me after a few days that the work of dhikr and ashgāl has ceased and most of the khanqās in Pakistan and India have been abandoned. Maybe this is what Ḥaḍrat Gangohī was indicating in the dream since dhikr and ashgāl were the main activities of his khanqā. When Ḥaḍrat lost his eyesight, he replaced teaching of aḥādīth with dhikr and ashgāl (meditative

devotions). Therefore, dhikr and ashgāl became my sole mission and this is why despite my weakness and busy daily devotions, I travel to Pakistan and London and wherever else I am promised a khanqā will be established. Whatever my condition, I try my best to make it. I wish, by the grace of Allah ﷻ that this work spreads; and if this was what Ḥaḍrat [Gangohī] meant to say [in the dream], then maybe I will be successful in the Hereafter."

Another beautiful dream Ḥaḍrat saw is reproduced from his diary below:

Zakariyyā saw in his dream that a man by the name of Walī Allāh is being summoned to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and is told, "Go tell Zakariyyā, you are chosen as the Quṭb al-Aqṭāb." He should think of himself as Quṭb al-Aqṭāb and inform the people of this also. I thought in the dream that maybe Walī Allāh refers to Shāh Walī Allāh Dehlawī. I felt that the reason he was called to inform me was because it sometimes crossed my mind that Shāh Ṣāḥib [Shāh Walī Allāh] calls himself, *nātik-e-Daurāń* (speaker of the time) and *mujtami' al-majma'* (embodiment of the gathering) and ascribes such high titles to himself in his writings. I always asked myself why he attributed such titles to himself. Finally, the dream corrected my misgivings and it became clear to me that Shāh Ṣāḥib did not do it of his own accord but was actually told to ascribe these lofty titles to himself.

Anyhow, these dreams and glad tidings only increased the responsibility Ḥaḍrat had put on himself. Thus, he concentrated all his efforts and time towards this one objective. Despite his old age, weakness, ailments and his aversion to traveling, he began travelling far and wide to fulfill this noble cause. Coincidentally, he saw this dream at the end of the 14th century, making his first journey at the dawn of the 15th century to one of the furthest outreaches of the earth [South Africa].

Ḥaḍrat's journeys and why they were made

One thing should be understood here and that is that Ḥaḍrat does not travel anywhere upon someone's request or insistence, his deci-

sions rely on istikhāra and the unseen signs from Allah ﷻ. It was his habit that when Allah ﷻ put an inclination in his heart for any place he began istikhāra for that place from the first of Muḥarram to the month of Rajab [7 months].

During this time [7 months] glad tidings, unseen signs, and dreams clear his path and remove all doubts, and then he finally decides to go with peace of mind and inner happiness.

Therefore, once Ḥaḍrat asked his successor and the head Muftī of 'Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, Muftī Maḥmūd Gangohī, "Muftī jī, was there any benefit in me going to London?" Muftī Ṣāḥib immediately responded, "Why are you asking me Ḥaḍrat? Ask the one who sent you there." Tears welled up in Ḥaḍrat's eyes.

JOURNEY TO SOUTH AFRICA

For some time, Ḥaḍrat has made it his mission in life to revive the umma through the work of taṣawwuf. The main and most beneficial time for this was the blessed month of Ramadan when guests came and spent time with Ḥaḍrat. Most of his Ramadan were spent in Sahāranpūr where hundreds of people came for i'tikāf and purified their hearts [this whole arrangment began and was continuous from Ramadan of 1365\July, 1946] though he was fortunate to spend some Ramadan in the Blessed Precincts as well. Aside from these two places, Ḥaḍrat had never spent Ramadan anywhere else. After he was instated to the honored position of Quṭb al-Aqṭāb, he set his sights on rectifying the Muslim world and began planning and working on how to establish the line of dhikr in every continent. A large group of Ḥaḍrat's successors who came every year to Ḥaḍrat in Sahāranpūr from South Africa often requested that he visit them also. For some time, Ḥaḍrat also seemed inclined towards going to South Africa, though he had not made any final decisions and it seemed unlikely considering his frailty and ailments. But who knows the secrets of Allah ﷻ to understand His ability to use anyone in any condition He wishes for His Dīn. One of Ḥaḍrat's devoted helpers, Shaikh Muḥammad Tutlā campaigned the most and would say that if Ḥaḍrat came to South Africa even once, the illuminations of īmān

would enlighten the land and provide the sustenance to spiritually rectify the people. Read the story of his efforts to bring Ḥaḍrat to South Africa in his own words. He says:

I was restless to bring Ḥaḍrat to South Africa but whenever I observed his condition I would stay quiet. Still, I never lost hope, and then a few years back I saw a dream that predicted Ḥaḍrat's coming. I saw in a dream that people are being informed in the Stanger Masjid [Stanger, South Africa] that Ḥaḍrat is arriving in one or two days. In the dream I am anxious, thinking how is this going to happen and how are we going to make arrangements on such short notice? Finally, the day came and nothing has been arranged and yet I am looking for a place near the masjid to install the commode [for Ḥaẓrat].

This dream raised my hopes. After the journey to London, the subject came up as to where Ḥaḍrat would spend the next Ramadan.

Ḥaḍrat said, "Africa should be given priority over the U.S., since our good friends like Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā live in South Africa."

Thereafter, I stopped over at Madina enroute to the convention in Deoband in March, 1980. Ḥaḍrat said to me,

'What brings you here?' Ḥaḍrat's permanent servant, Abū al-Ḥasan replied,

'Ḥaḍrat, he has come to take you with him.' Ḥaḍrat replied,

'My beloved, I am frail and can barely make it to the Blessed Precinct, but pray for me.' This raised my hopes even more. Then after the tablīgh convention in U.S., I came to Faisalabad, Pakistan. The moment he saw me Ḥaḍrat said,

'I have been thinking about you for a couple of days. We are coming to your place.' I said,

'Ḥaḍrat, On this journey?' He replied,

'You can discuss that with Abū al-Ḥasan and 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ.' So all three of us sat to discuss the matter. Abū al-Ḥasan said,

'as for now, the plan is for Ḥaḍrat to travel to Sahāranpūr and stay there for three to four months after Ramadan. And then we will need some time to acquire the visa and papers to travel to

South Africa. In that case, it is best that Ḥaḍrat come in Ramadan. I thought, 'It is not Ḥaḍrat's routine to spend Ramadan anywhere else but in Sahāranpūr. I hope the plan doesn't change and Ḥaḍrat decides to stay in Sahāranpūr for Ramadan.' This thought made me restless.

A few days later I came to Ḥaḍrat; his helpers were massaging his feet. Hearing the sound of footsteps, he asked,

'who is it?' One of Ḥaḍrat's main helpers, Shaikh Najīb Allāh said, 'It is Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā.' I said,

'Ḥaḍrat! I wanted to ask about your plans for South Africa.' Ḥaḍrat said,

'These brothers are asking me to spend Ramadan here, but that will be decided in Rajab. 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ is my key and the order will come from Madina.'

After this, Ḥaḍrat travelled from Faisalabad to Sahāranpūr. Upon arrival in Sahāranpūr he became extremely sick. When I saw Ḥaḍrat's condition, I didn't have the courage to say anything and returned to South Africa. After some time, when Ḥaḍrat arrived in Madina from Sahāranpūr, I wrote a letter to Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ stating that,

'You should come to South Africa for the tablīgh convention and assess the situation and arrangements if Ḥaḍrat decides to come for Ramadan. It will give Ḥaḍrat some peace of mind.' Coincidentally, Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ and Qāḍī Ṣāḥib were already planning a trip to London and South Africa; however it was yet to be confirmed. When Shaikh received the letter they decided to make the trip and came down to South Africa. They checked everything and notified Ḥaḍrat of the prospects of Ramadan in South Africa after their return. A few days later, Dr. Ismā'īl Memon telephoned me to say that Ḥaḍrat has decided to come and that I would be the host; however the plan would be confirmed in Rajab.

After Rajab, it was decided that Ḥaḍrat would spend his Ramadan in South Africa. Ḥaḍrat sent me a letter laying out the conditions for spending Ramadan in South Africa. This letter was quite a surprise for the people here in South Africa.

The letter is reproduced below:

Respected al-Ḥāj Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā Ṣāḥib,
After Sunna *salām,*
I haven't heard from you lately. I was also very sick during this time. It was difficult to write or even listen to the letters. I wished to spend Ramadan at your place for a long time, but this year the inclination was much stronger. It has been my routine to perform istikhāra many months prior to Ramadan and I have been doing it for the last fifteen days. May Allah ﷻ bless wherever He decides for my Ramadan. I have been told from different people that they see dreams and glad tidings indicating that I will be spending it in your place. However, nothing is confirmed yet. This will be clarified in the first week of Rajab. If your place is decided then I will arrive on the 15th of Sha'bān and depart on the 15th of Shawwāl. You sent a letter many days ago to 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ but he wasn't here. I sent the letter to Makka [to Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ] with a note that, 'if anything is in the letter for me [Ḥaḍrat] send it back.' He [Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ] wrote back that there was no letter for me [Ḥaḍrat] and just small talk with him[Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ]. I am writing some things ahead of time for your ease and information so that if you have any questions you can ask me now. I have always been living off of you and received your gifts every year, but since this journey is for a very specific reason and you are hosting the whole event, I leave the matter in your hands [i.e. if anyone wishes to give gifts to Ḥaḍrat, it is his responsibility to refuse them].

1. I should be accommodated in a building that is under your management but which can accommodate a large gathering of people. There were a thousand people in the beginning [of Ramadan] in Faisalabad, which increased to a couple of thousand before the end of the month. I will stay in one place only. I have heard your house and the masjid are small and that Aḥmad Miāń and Ibrāhīm Miāń's places are larger. You may discuss on which is the best place for my accommodations. I prefer to stay in your place but I have heard that it is too small. Furthermore, you are not

allowed to pay for the expense of those accompanying me on this trip. I will have five people with me. The cost of their round trip is solely my responsibility.

2. Gifts will not be accepted from anyone but those who are in the habit of sending from before [you know better who they are]. I want to keep myself safe from the accusation that these Maulwīs come in the name of Ramadan and then collect funds for themselves and their schools. The only exceptions to this rule are Qāẓī ʻAbd al-Qādir Ṣāḥib and Muftī Maḥmūd because of their personal contacts and relations there. I have nothing against their accepting gifts or compensation for their travel expenses.

3. Gather as many dhākirīn as you can until the 15th of Shaʻbān, but remember that the exact time of arrival will be confirmed in the first week of Rajab. I am only telling you this for your information.

4. I am very sick. You take responsibility for the 'stay with me for one day' or 'stay for one day' issue. I don't have the strength to go here and there. You have your own personal relations with Muftī Ṣāḥib and Qāḍī Ṣāḥib, take them wherever you like. I am not writing this to you only; the same conditions were laid out for Yūsuf Mutāla last year.

5. There should be no formalities in terms of food. I like the Chacha Saʻdī invitation of Shiraz.[48] The truth is that I lose my

48 The story is that Shaikh Saʻdī was invited by one of his students. He prepared a variety of dishes, sweets and platters for his teacher. Once the Shaikh ate he uttered, 'Oh, the invitation of Shirāz.' The student thought he was complaining about the food. The student invited the Shaikh a few days later and prepared a bigger feast than last time. Once the shaikh had eaten he uttered, 'Oh, the invitation of Shirāz.' The student felt he had not satisfied his teacher yet. He called him a few days later, this time, preparing the biggest feast ever. The teacher ate and uttered the same as last time. The student was now curious to know how great the invitation of Shirāz was. He asked, "Oh, my teacher, what is the invitation of Shirāz?' The Shaikh said, Come to my house in a couple of days and I will treat you to the invitation of Shirāz.' A few days later, the student came to his Shaikh's house and sat down. The teacher brought out dried bread and leftover food, sat down with him to eat, and proclaimed, 'this is the invitation of Shirāz.' Then after a short while he said, 'your invitation only lasts a few

appetite when I see a variety of dishes. There should be one or two types of food at the most and nothing more. 'Umar ﷺ used his whip when anyone cooked more than two dishes. We are considered the elders; we should at least try to adhere to the ways of our predecessors.

6. Since discussions have already started about coming to your place and I heard that the trip to your place is six to seven hours long, I am extremely anxious and tense. I heard there is a charter plane that brings in people going for hajj and returns without any passengers; if this is true please let me know. I am awfully frightened. I am already sick, frail, and my feet are in the grave while my friends are still young. May Allah ﷻ reward all of you. Dr. Ismā'īl Ṣāḥib says that Maulwī Yūsuf himself told him about this charter plane. I would also like to know the cost of the ticket and at what times it departs from here [Madina]. I am so worried about that eight hour trip. May Allah ﷻ fulfill your wish of many years and make it the most beneficial; otherwise I never went on vacation trips even when I was young.

7. The plan is not yet confirmed [that will be in Rajab], but if I am to come, please make our friends understand that I do not want to be taken anywhere for one or two days. I don't have the strength to do so.

wa al-Salām,
Written by Ḥabīb Allāh for Ḥaḍrat Shaikh al-Ḥadīth
February 2, 1981

In another letter he writes,

Gather as many dhākirīn as you can who promise to devote their time and life to this cause [of dhikr of Allah ﷻ]. I remember my uncle [Shaikh Ilyās] that if someone gave him a gift, he said, "I don't want your gift, I want you." Also remember to arrange matters such that I don't have to go anywhere.

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days while the invitation of Shirāz can be held every day of the year.'

From these letters, the reader quickly realizes Ḥaḍrat Shaikh's wisdom, prudence, insight, sagaciousness, austerity, independence and faithfulness to his mission.

After this letter, Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā, Ibrāhīm Miāń, and Ḥāfiẓ Shākir Desai came to Madina and convinced Ḥaḍrat until he finalized his plan and decided to come. During this time, many people offered to pay for Ḥaḍrat's and his helpers' tickets and other expenses but Ḥaḍrat refused, paying for them and himself from his own account. All the expenses came to two 200,000 rupees [according to that time]. After this, they returned and set about preparing for Ḥaḍrat's arrival.

CHOOSING THE VENUE [STANGER MASJID]

The biggest issue facing the organizers [and Ḥaḍrat also] was finding the right place for Ḥaḍrat for i'tikāf. Shaikh Ibrāhīm Miāń and Muftī Aḥmad Miāń, close confidants of Ḥaḍrat, insisted that Ḥaḍrat stay in Johannesburg and spoke with Ḥaḍrat for half an hour over the phone. They presented 32 reasons as to why Ḥaḍrat should perform i'tikāf in Johannesburg. But since it was colder in Johannesburg, and the masjid was small, it was marked off the list. Since South Africa is south of the equator summer in Ḥijāz and India is winter in South Africa. Stanger is south of Johannesburg, therefore the weather in Stanger is more moderate. The masjid is also spacious and comprises three stories. The third story holds approximately 1200 people while the lower two about 1000 each. There is a sufficient number of restrooms and ample parking around the masjid for cars. Hot and cold water is available [a luxury in many countries] and the surrounding area is peaceful.

In addition, some glad tidings were given about this masjid [another main reason the Stanger masjid was favored over other masjids] Ḥaḍrat's special helper, Shaikh Najīb Allāh saw in his dream that he is in the building where Ḥaḍrat stayed before Ramadan in Stanger. The eastern front of this building has a large minaret that glimmers like the minaret that stands next to

the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ green dome in Madina. He is on his way somewhere when someone stopped him saying,

"Najīb Allāh, listen! Somebody is calling out from the minaret." He asked,

"Who is it?" Then he himself came by the minaret and heard someone saying,

"*Niʿm al-ʿabd, niʿm al-ʿabd"* (what a great servant, what a great servant!). He began climbing the skyscraping minaret. As he was about to reach the top he heard,

"Niʿm al-ʿabd, Zakariyyā" (what a great servant Zakariyyā is!). He was about to climb higher when he thought, "what if Ḥaḍrat calls me." As he was about to turn back he woke up.

ONE QUICK LOOK AT THE ARRANGEMENTS

Before narrating the details of Ḥaḍrat's journey, it is appropriate to say a few words about the sincere workers, their fervor and sacrifice, who made the whole event possible. This is just one way of letting them know our appreciation for and recognition of their hard work; as the hadith says, "*Whoever is not grateful to the people is not grateful to Allah* ﷻ"[49] and also to inform others of their sincerity and love for the Dīn of Allah ﷻ.

As the readers know, the masjid was spacious and big but as the gathering and number of visitors grew [especially during the weekends when the number exceeded 7,000 people], there was need for additional accommodations. Therefore, three tents, each accommodating 3,000 people, were pitched on three sides of the masjid. Also, a large building adjacent to the masjid was allocated for the accommodations, including food and drink for guests who visited during the weekend as well as for the 100 volunteers who served the guests daily. In preparation and expectation of a large inflow of guests, fifty faucets, twelve bathrooms, and four baths were added to the existing fifty faucets, twelve bathrooms and two baths. Four pre-existing baths with only cold water supply were

49 Tirmidhī, *mā Jā' fi al-Shukr*

provided with hot water through two large water tanks that were installed nearby. Two men were permanently assigned to maintain the heat of the water in the tanks twenty-fours a day. A wireless system was also installed to sustain the crowd especially during the weekend. Also, an information center staffed with a physician from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. was opened temporarily near the masjid, which provided first aid and medications. A public phone was also set up by the masjid. May Allah ﷻ reward the imam, who temporarily resigned from his administrative duties and also vacated his four-room house for the guests. Besides Qāḍī who stayed the whole month, 10 to 15 other special guests were also accommodated in the imam's house.

Another major issue was parking space. Though the parking area around the masjid accommodated as many as one hundred and fifty cars, it was nevertheless inadequate, since most people keep cars here [as they have a difficult time getting around without one]. However, the question was where to find space for people to park their cars? The line-up of cars was approximately half a mile long, though five cars would be parked against each other on the sides and middle of the road. The government designated the whole road as parking space and assigned traffic control police to cordon off the area from general traffic. Despite all these measures, parking space was still lacking.

For Ḥaḍrat's comfort, a small room was built with a permanent commode next to Ḥaḍrat's quarters which made it easy for Ḥaḍrat to attend to his personal needs. Another room furnished with a kitchen and hot and cold water supply was built next to Ḥaḍrat's room for his helpers.

The arrangement for seḥr and ifṭār and food and drink of the guests was superb. The volunteers truly showed their open-heartedness and hospitality in this matter. Even the guests became embarrassed sometimes. Ḥaḍrat constantly emphasized the importance of taking care of the guests and reminded them of Chacha Sa'di's invitation of Shirāz. The helpers went out of their way to serve and care for the guests and often humbly admitted they never

did enough and were lacking in this regard. 100 volunteers were appointed for taking care of the guests, 50 of whom were entrusted with ifṭār and 50 with seḥr. The lower story of the masjid was for the local people in i'tikāf while the second and third story was for foreigners and special guests. In the lower story, ifṭār consisted of rice, meat, sweets, fruits, drinks, biscuits, and tea after tarāwīḥ. Five or six different types of curries were made for guests from abroad to accommodate their tastes. Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā supervised one group that comprised of Shaikh 'Abd al- Ḥāfiẓ, Sufi Muḥammad Iqbāl, Shaikh Yūsuf Mutāla and Muftī Sulaimān Pāndor. This group attended to various duties.

The group in charge of foreign affairs was: Yunus Nurgut, Ghulām Ḥusain Mullā, Ayyūb Isḥāq and Qāsim Mehtar while Ismā'īl Ḥāfiẓjī, Aḥmad Mānjra, and Brother 'Abid were in charge of kitchen duties. The responsibility for announcements, translation [for foreign guests] and managing the gathering fell on Shaikh Qāsim Bhaurat, who executed his duties professionally and beautifully. The crowd was also quick to obey his command [they obeyed with the first announcement].

DEPARTURE FROM MADINA AND THE JOURNEY TO REUNION

The plan to spend Ramadan in South Africa was finalized and the necessary preparations were complete when Shaikh Sa'īd Angār arrived from Reunion with four friends to meet Ḥaḍrat in Madina. He requested Ḥaḍrat that he come to Reunion, saying, "Please come to our place for a short time, either on your way to or when returning from South Africa." Shaikh Sa'īd Angār had long-standing relations with Ḥaḍrat, had translated many of Ḥaḍrat's books and is presently the director of the Islamic center in Reunion. Ḥaḍrat told his helpers to ask him, "How many khanqās will they establish and how many dhākirīn are they going to prepare?" This was the only condition Ḥaḍrat put for visiting Reunion. Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ said, "Since there is no concessionary fare for this trip unless one purchases a year round ticket, the expense will become outrageously high and the ticket fare will increase by fifty

percent." Ḥaḍrat replied, "Don't worry about that, just make sure my conditions are fulfilled; are they going to establish khanqās and prepare dhākirīn? The Reunion delegation promised that khanqās would be established in Saint-Denis and Saint-Paul. Ten to fifteen dhākirīn are ready for dhikr while others are ready to be instructed for dhikr. After that, Ḥaḍrat made his decision to visit Reunion. They insisted upon paying for the tickets but Ḥaḍrat refused and paid for everything himself. Ḥaḍrat's special helper, Shaikh Ismā'īl Badat, had already left for Reunion to survey the arrangements there.

Ḥaḍrat departed on the 4th of Sha'bān/ 6th of June on Saturday after 'Aṣr from Madina and reached Badr shortly before Maghrib. After Maghrib, they departed for Makka and arrived 4 p.m [10 p.m.] at Brother Sadī's house. After 'umra, everyone ate and Ḥaḍrat rested. On the14th of Sha'bān/ 16th of June, he departed for Jeddah on Monday night and arrived at the masjid of the old Jeddah airport where a large crowd had already gathered. Muftī Zain al-'Abidīn led everyone in du'ā, then Ḥaḍrat departed for the new airport at 5:15 p.m. [10:15 p.m.] Dr. Ẓafīr al-Dīn had taken permission to take Ḥaḍrat through the gate from which the royal family travelled [*al-bāb al-malik*]. Once they reached the airport, officials stamped the passports and some people were allowed to board with Ḥaḍrat.

The plane departed from Jeddah for Madagascar. However, as the plane was not granted access to land in Madagascar, it continued onwards without refueling and arrived 45 minutes before scheduled time in Reunion. Despite the early arrival, the crowd that came to welcome Ḥaḍrat at the airport was enormous. Shaikh Sa'īd Angār boarded the plane with friends. Ḥaḍrat left the airport without checking through customs but waited outside until his helpers passed through customs. After everyone was out, Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ supplicated and then everyone departed for the main residence. It was previously announced that, "There will be no [immediate] gathering for people to meet with Ḥaḍrat." Immediately after arrival, the schedule for the daily routine was as follows:

- After Fajr: individual devotions
- Breakfast at 8:30 a.m.
- Reading session between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. in which *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* was read in French.
- Ẓuhr at 1:15 p.m.
- 'Aṣr at 4:30 p.m.
- After 'Aṣr: gathering for bai'a and meeting with Ḥaḍrat
- After Maghrib, khatm-e-khawājagān then gathering dhikr until the adhān of 'Ishā
- 'Ishā at 8 p.m. After 'Ishā, Sura Yāsīn followed by du'ā and bai'a of women, then dinner.

On the 18th of Sha'bān/20th of June, Ḥaḍrat left from Saint-Denis to Saint-Paul to take women in bai'a. It was vacation time and cars were everywhere because of which Ḥaḍrat arrived late at the school. Upon arrival, a few close friends met with Ḥaḍrat and then he inaugurated the memorization of some students. Shortly after, the women and some men took bai'a with Ḥaḍrat. After bai'a, Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ led everyone in du'ā followed by a gathering with Ḥaḍrat in which everyone met and shook hands with him. During this time, Ḥaḍrat also blew in the bottles of water and honey for blessing. As Ẓuhr time had started, it was prayed immediately after the gathering. After Ẓuhr, an enormous mat was laid out for food, which was attended by approximately one thousand people. Thereafter, everyone rested until 'Aṣr, which was prayed immediately after its time started. After 'Aṣr, everyone left to attend a gathering arranged for the women. Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ had already arrived earlier. His talk deeply affected the women and many of them began wearing the veil, though it was unheard of in Reunion. Maghrib was prayed upon arriving at the residence in Saint-Denis. Despite the continuous travelling, Ḥaḍrat was in good health and not in the least bit tired. The next day, on the 21st of June [Sunday], everyone shook hands with Ḥaḍrat. Shaikh Ismā'īl Angār's uncle, Shaikh Sa'īd Angār was very grateful for Ḥaḍrat's visit to Reunion and presented Ḥaḍrat with an official

address of appreciation on behalf of the Muslims of Reunion. At the airport, Ḥaḍrat's helpers and a large crowd prayed Maghrib with Ḥaḍrat. Then, Ḥaḍrat boarded South African Airlines on the 19th of Sha'bān/21st of June, arriving at Durban Airport at 9:15 p.m local time.

ARRIVAL AT DURBAN

The news of Ḥaḍrat's arrival spread throughout the country like wildfire. People longed to see and meet with Ḥaḍrat and many people had grown beards in anticipation. The fervor for Dīn was like never before, each minute and second being counted for Ḥaḍrat to arrive. Now as Ḥaḍrat was about to arrive, people sat eagerly waiting. It was the time to fulfill the yearning in their hearts, to light the fire of love of Allah ﷻ and to gain success of the material world and Hereafter. Thousands of people yearned for just one glimpse of Ḥaḍrat. Ḥaḍrat's honorable successor, Muftī Maḥmūd Gangohī had also come to receive Ḥaḍrat at the request of the local people to teach them the proprieties and correct way of gaining blessings from the elders. A large group of Muftī Maḥmūd's murīds was originally from South Africa. Two lifts carried Ḥaḍrat Shaikh with his wheelchair off the airplane and into the airport. Ḥaḍrat's main hosts, Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā, 'Abd al-Khāliq Desai, Brother Pādia and other respected members of the Durban community were at the airport to receive Ḥaḍrat. Muftī Maḥmūd led everyone in du'ā, and then Ḥaḍrat departed with his helpers to Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā's residence. Before Ḥaḍrat's arrival, posters had already been posted everywhere highlighting Ḥaḍrat's schedule. The schedule is as follows:

- individual daily devotions after Fajr, then rest
- breakfast at 9 a.m.
- a talk by Muftī Maḥmūd from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m.
- Lunch after Ẓuhr, then rest
- public gathering after 'Aṣr
- Khatm-e-khawājagān after Maghrib followed by gathering of dhikr

- Sura Yāsīn after ʿIshā followed by duʿā, then inauguration of students' Qur'an
- Baiʿa of men and women followed by meeting and shaking hands with Ḥaḍrat
- Dinner

Ḥaḍrat and his successors attended the last meeting of a tablīgh convention being held during that time.

On the 29th of Shaʿbān [Thursday], Ḥaḍrat shifted with all the guests from the residence to the masjid. Earlier in the day, Ḥaḍrat visited the Stanger Muslim cemetery after ʿAṣr and supplicated for the Shaikh's [Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā's] parents and all deceased Muslims. This cemetery is a vast open field. Rows of Muslim graves lay side by side with rows of Christian graves; a large barbed-wire fence runs in the middle. Before Maghrib, everyone arrived at the masjid and laid out their beds in their designated areas. On the 2nd of July [1st of Ramadan), news of the moonsighting in Johannesburg was received by phone and the daily routine was set.

THE DAILY ROUTINE FOR RAMADAN

The goal was to make the daily routine schedule the same as in Sahāranpūr and in this the organizers were extremely successful. The Sunna of Fajr was prayed immediately after Fajr adhān, followed immediately after by Fajr ṣalāt. Shaikh Yūsuf Mutāla, formerly the principal of ʿDār al-ʿUlūm in Bolton, England and one of the graduates of Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm, Sahāranpūr was the permanent imam for Fajr ṣalāt. He is also one of the beloved and close successors of Ḥaḍrat Shaikh. Ḥaḍrat came to England two years prior on his invitation and intends to visit again for the completion of the six books of hadith, Allah ﷻ willing.

The existence of a ʿDār al-ʿUlūm in a place like England is in itself a miracle. Ḥaḍrat always worries about the progress and growth of this ʿDār al-ʿUlūm, the fruits of which are evident [for one who visits there]. May Allah ﷻ keep [Shaikh Yūsuf Mutāla] and his ʿDār al-ʿUlūm under His protection and grant it the ability

to succeed and progress. After Fajr, the newcomers and those departing get an opportunity to shake hands with Ḥaḍrat. During the weekends, this meeting with Ḥaḍrat was scheduled after 'Ishā. In the beginning of Ramadan, Muftī Maḥmūd gave a talk from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. for nearly one week. After that, he and Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥalīm alternated every day. These talks were mostly about taṣawwuf and general advice to the people.

Muftī Maḥmūd has gained permission in taṣawwuf from Ḥaḍrat Shaikh, Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Jaunpūrī and Shāh Waṣī Allāh Ilāhabādī. He is a Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm alumnus, one of the board members and head Muftī of 'Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband today. Presently, he is one of the greatest personalities in the Muslim world [especially in the Indian subcontinent and more specifically Bangladesh] and an authority in Islamic jurisprudence and rhetoric/debate. He is an exemplar of the predecessors in his strength, grasp and depth of the knowledge of Dīn and in his humility and simplicity. He is also one of the most honored successors of Ḥaḍrat Shaikh. One can read more about him in the book "The Scholars of Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm, Their Literary and Scholastic Contributions" [By Shaikh Muḥammad Shāhid].

- Khatm-e-khawājagān after Ẓuhr followed by gathering of dhikr

  Open gathering after 'Aṣr in which the book *Irshād al-Mulūk, Ikmāl al-Shiyam* and the booklet *Nisbat aur Ijāzat* are read. At first, it was read by Shaikh Najīb Allāh, then Shaikh Mu'īn al-Dīn [who is the Shaikh al-Ḥadīth of Madrasa Imdādia [Murādabad, India] and one of the longtime devotees and successor of Ḥaḍrat]. His manner of reading makes its easy for listeners to understand the book.
- Dinner after Maghrib. The curtains of Ḥaḍrat's quarters are removed at about 7 p.m. and people come to sit with Ḥaḍrat after they finish their dinner. In this gathering, students commenced their Qur'an with Ḥaḍrat and some times bai'a was also held at this time. This gathering ended with a short du'ā.

- The adhān of ʿIshā was given at 7:30 p.m. and ʿIshā then tarāwīḥ began at 8 p.m.
- Tarāwīḥ was led by Ḥaḍrat's son-in-law Shaikh Salmān. He has recited approximately eighteen Qur'an in tarāwīḥ to Ḥaḍrat. He arrived in South Africa before Ramadan from Sahāranpūr. In the first years, he recited three parts in every tarāwīḥ. Ḥaḍrat explained that the reason [three parts were recited] was so that people who arrive late are not deprived of listening to the whole Qur'an in Ramadan. But due to Ḥaḍrat's illness, this routine could not be upheld and it was decreased to one part. Ramadan began with one and a quarter part and then one part each day until the Qur'an was completed on the 29th. Shaikh recites the Qur'an clearly and fluently. Sometimes, during the ṣalāt he loses his voice and cries, moving the hearts of the listeners who are standing behind him.
- Sura Yāsīn and duʿā after ʿIshā
- The reading session is managed by Shaikh Shāhid, who is Ḥaḍrat's grandson and successor and Shaikh Inām al-Ḥasan's son-in-law. He is one of the acclaimed graduates of Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm Sahāranpūr and the author of *Tārīkh-e-Maẓāhir*. The reading session was held after a reading of the hadiths of ṣalāt and salām. This year, two books *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* and *Akābir kā Ramaḍān* were read. The only exception was Saturday night in which the odes of *Jāmī*, the odes from *Qaṣīda Bihāria Nānautia* and *Maut kī Yād* were sung.
- During the weekend, people met with Ḥaḍrat after ʿIshā [i.e. after the book] and bottles of water and honey were brought in for blowing into for blessings. So many people came with honey and almonds [to be blown into] that the local stores ran out their supply while the number of bottles had also increased to the extent that it became difficult for Ḥaḍrat to blow into them. Then, two tanks were brought in and filled with water. After Ḥaḍrat blew into them, the water from the two tanks was distributed amongst the people. In the end, Ḥaḍrat blew into two gallons of water that were then poured into the tank water.

In the beginning, women also came for tarāwīḥ in the tents near the masjid. Loudspeakers were installed on the minarets so they could listen to the recitation of the Qur'an, but when Muftī Maḥmūd objected to this, the loudspeakers were removed. The women were told not to attend the congregation but that if they wished they could listen to the Qur'an in the hall. Muftī Maḥmūd and Shaikh ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm delivered the talks before Jumuʿa while Shaikh ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ was permanently in charge of Jumuʿa. He also led in all the duʿās throughout the blessed month. Shaikh ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ is also one of the respected successors of Ḥaḍrat who has been blessed him with an elevated spiritual rank and is also a graduate of Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm Sahāranpūr.

OBSERVATIONS, REFLECTIONS AND RESULTS

Ḥaḍrat's coming to a place of disbelief [*kufr*] was undoubtedly a raḥma and blessing and a clear sign that brought out truth [*ḥaqq*] from falsehood [*bāṭil*]. He changed the climate of the country and people began feeling a spiritual revolution within them. Even those who were opposed to Ḥaḍrat became regretful.

اَلْفَضْلُ مَا شَهِدَتْ بِهِ الْأَعْدَاءُ

Greatness is that which the enemies bear witness to

People from every class and walk of life were amazed by this miraculous turn of events. When they entered the environs of this area abounding in spiritual liveliness, they found the panacea for the spiritual sicknesses afflicting their hearts. They gained a peace of mind and tranquility that they would have never been able to achieve through their own efforts and plans alone. Thousands of people came in droves from every corner of the country driven only by the love of Allah ﷻ.

Scholars, students, labor workers/white-collar workers, businessmen, hadith masters, jurists, and sufis all gathered in this place to be filled with the light of īmān and awareness of Allah ﷻ. And once people stepped in, they had no desire to come out. They sat

down almost impulsively and cried over their past life and begged for the raḥma of Allah تعالى.

When the worship began after tarāwīḥ, the atmosphere became charged. Some are reciting Qur'an, some are standing behind groups of ḥuffāẓ in voluntary ṣalāt*,* some are trembling and crying in front of Allah تعالى and some are conversing with Allah تعالى in their du'ā. Words cannot express the spiritual liveliness of that time.

Even the police officers who patrolled the area during the night were affected by the calming and peaceful atmosphere. Magazines and newspapers also had much to say about the event. Opponents who had vehemently opposed Ḥaḍrat's coming, distributing pamphlets and building it into a movement, came to Ḥaḍrat showing regret for their actions. They admitted their faults, expressed their regret and begged Ḥaḍrat for forgiveness. The ringleaders, who instigated the use of physical force against the *aḥl al-ḥaqq* also came asking Ḥaḍrat for his forgiveness; Ḥaḍrat was just as fast in forgiving them.

Since no khanqās exist in this part of the world, most people are either completely ignorant of taṣawwuf or don't think much of it. In a country deeply rooted in European culture and ideals, this spirituality was something of a marvel. Whoever stepped into this atmosphere felt like an arrow had pierced his heart. He trembled and was permeated with the love of Allah تعالى and returned with the firm intention to change his life to the way of Allah تعالى.

There were about four hundred people in i'tikāf. Scholars, students, professors, physicians and people from every walk of life attended the gathering. University students, who happened to be on a three week vacation, came in large numbers and took refuge in the worship of Allah تعالى. In fact, most of the volunteers running the daily operation of i'tikāf were university students. They began to work at ifṭār time and after taking a few dates and water began serving the guests with love, care, and dedication. Their way of taking care of the guests was truly fascinating; nobody ever needed to ask for anything. Despite a short and quick ifṭār, they served guests after Maghrib and once the guests were finished, they

ate whatever was leftover. After tarāwīḥ, they sat and recited the Qur'an until seḥr, then stood again to serve the guests for seḥr. This didn't go on for one or two days only, but continued throughout the month of Ramadan. People were also amazed to observe a large group of college students in i'tikāf. One of the elders passed by two students and overheard them talking. One was saying to the other, "Yo crazy! What are you doing here?" The other replied, "I have come to see the spiritual program." Some of the students were so affected by the environment that they left the university and college to study the knowledge of Dīn in the schools. Thousands of men and women took bai'a and various places began holding gatherings of dhikr, six of which are worthy of mention:

1. Stanger Jamiah Masjid **Shaikh Yūsuf Tutlā**
2. Spanger [Durban] **Muftī Bashīr**
3. Newtown Masjid **Shaikh Sulaimān Pāndor**
4. Lenasia Jamiah Masjid **Aḥmad Miāń– Aḥmad Darwaish**
5. Mafigang **Shaikh Muḥammad Gārdī**
6. Jermiston **Shaikh Mūsā Pāndor**

All of the above mentioned masjids established a daily schedule for the gathering of dhikr while seven or eight other places also set up gatherings of dhikr.

Another blessing of this atmosphere was that the crowd, despite its enormous numbers, observed calm and quiet at all times. Even with the multitudes of people waiting to shake hands with Ḥaḍrat, there was never any pushing or shoving. Everyone obeyed the announcements and controlled their desires and emotions in order to keep the peaceful ambience of the gathering. About six to seven thousand people gathered on the weekends. As the masjid became short of space, tents were pitched outside in which people also prayed tarāwīḥ. Hundreds of locals came to attend the tarāwīḥ, spend the night and then leave early next morning [Durban is about forty miles from Stanger]. Approximately nine people accepted Islam. During the gatherings of dhikr, the chanting of

dhikr reverberated everywhere, creating a wonderful and ecstatic feeling that made the dhākirīn oblivious of everything besides Allah ﷻ. The effect of the gatherings of dhikr attended by hundreds of people is indescribable; this is in addition to the spiritual aura that can only be felt by the people of spiritual insight [*baṣīra*] that draped the attendees in its folds. The effect and benefit of Ḥaḍrat's visit and stay here are so great they can neither be expressed in words nor put in writing. Below some of the glad tidings about this event are reproduced for the benefit of the reader:

SOME GLAD TIDINGS ABOUT THE JOURNEY TO SOUTH AFRICA

On the 27th of Rajab, 1401 Hijri/May 30, 1981, one of the elders went by the blessed grave of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, said the ṣalāt and salām, and requested that du'ā be made for Ḥaḍrat's health and his journey to South Africa. He suddenly saw the Blessed Prophet ﷺ standing and the sun rising from the other side of the horizon. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "He [Ḥaḍrat Shaikh] is the key of truth", then added,

إِنَّهُ مِفْتَاحُ الْقُلُوبِ وَبِرُؤْيَتِهِ تَنْجَلِي الْحَقَائِقُ

He is the key of the hearts and the realities are manifest through him.

After some time, he raised his blessed hands and supplicated,

اَللّٰهُمَّ مَظْهَرَ الْحَقَّ بِالْحَقِّ أَظْهِرِ بِهِ الْحَقَّ

Oh, the One who manifests truth through the truth! Make the truth evident through him [Ḥaḍrat].

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ read this du'ā three times loudly.

On the 28th of Ramadan, Shaikh Muḥammad Sulaimān Pāndor saw the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in his dream. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ looked over the whole masjid [Stanger Masjid] and saw two places empty near Ḥaḍrat's quarters. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ objected

to them being vacant and said, "These should be for the guests." He [Shaikh Suleimān] became frightened that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ might complain to Ḥaḍrat. After this, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ walked into Ḥaḍrat's quarter and expressed his joy and Ḥaḍrat was also very happy. Then he sees that Ḥaḍrat is lying down and the gathering is large and the masjid full. Then Ḥaḍrat said something like, "What is all this, who am I?" A while later I replied, "Ḥaḍrat this is a beautiful twenty-four hour program that has been very beneficial. No one like you has ever come to this part of the world before, nor has any Ramadan been spent in this way. And the gathering of dhikr has benefitted the people greatly." Ḥaḍrat was happy and beaming with joy. One of the elders was sitting near Ḥaḍrat. Ḥaḍrat repeatedly said to him, "Look brother, this is the real thing, this is the real thing."

Another elder saw a large cavalcade passing by the masjid shouting, "Hurray for Ḥaḍrat Gangohī, hurray for Ḥaḍrat Gangohī."

THE SECOND BOOK

Ramadan of the Elders

Most of this book is reproduced from Ḥaḍrat Shaikh's book, *Akābir kā Ramaḍān,* and is narrated in Ḥaḍrat's [Shaikh al-Hadith Muḥammad Zakariyyā] own words.

Ramadan of the Elders

Some of the daily devotions of our elders [in the month of Ramadan] are mentioned in *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān*. Shortly after, as my autobiography was being compiled, I added a few other devotions of my Shaikh, Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī, at the request of some friends. Considering the relevance of these devotions to the subject, I have narrated them again. I sent out a questionnaire to Ḥaḍrat Shaikh Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī's successor Khawāja 'Azīz al-Ḥasan Majdhūb about Ḥaḍrat's [Ḥaḍrat Thānwī's] devotions during Ramadan. When I received the reply, some friends insisted I answer these same questions about Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī as well. Therefore, I will first put up the questions from the questionnaire and then answer about Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī's devotions in light of the questionnaire.

Letter sent from Zakariyyā to Khawāja 'Azīz al-Ḥasan Majdhūb

My friend Ḥaḍrat Khawāja [may Allah تعالى increase you in your honor],

al-Salāmu 'Alaikum wa Raḥmat Allāh,

It made me really happy to know that you have settled down in Thāna Bawan for some time now. May Allah تعالى increase your progress in Dīn.

I am writing this letter at this time for a particular reason. I couldn't think of a better person to ask this favor from than yourself

since you are one of the closest to Ḥaḍrat; because of this I don't think you will find it hard to attend to this task.

I actually wished to know Ḥaḍrat's daily routine for the month of Ramadan. My propriety towards him stops me from asking Ḥaḍrat himself and I won't get much from staying for one or two days, so I am making you a means of learning of his devotions. I hope you will not feel burdened by this task. For your ease, I have already prepared a questionnaire.

1. What is his habit regarding the time he breaks his fast? Does he follow a preset timetable or go by the moon?
2. If he follows a timetable, does he wait a few extra minutes or break the fast immediately?
3. Does he break his fast with any specific food or with whatever is available? If it is something specific, what is it?
4. How much time is given between ifṭār and ṣalāt?
5. Does he break his fast at home or in the school?
6. Does he break his fast alone or with the gathering?
7. Are dates and Zamzam important for ifṭār?
8. Is there any difference in the amount of voluntary ṣalāt he prays after Maghrib? How about any difference in the way it is prayed [e.g. is it longer]?
9. Does he recite any specific suras in the voluntary ṣalāt?
10. Regarding dinner after ifṭār, i.e. what are the times for eating? Also, is there any increase or decrease in the amount he eats in Ramadan?
11. I learned that he listened to Qur'an in tarāwīḥ in the school this year due to illness, but what is his routine otherwise? Does he recite himself and how much every day?
12. Any specific day in which the Qur'an is completed e.g. on the 27th or 29th or any other day?
13. After tarāwīḥ, is it his habit to sit with his helpers or not? Does he leave for his home immediately after tarāwīḥ or after a period of time?
14. Does he rest when he arrives at home or does he do something

else? From what time to what time does he rest?
15. What is his habit of recitation in tahajjud i.e. how many part does he recite and from what to what time?
16. What is his habit in seḥr i.e. what time does he eat and how much time before dawn does he stop?
17. Does he have any habit of drinking milk or anything else in seḥr? Does he eat fresh chappati [thin unleavened bread] or leftover from the night before?
18. Is Fajr prayed near sunrise [*isfār*] or in its beginning time?
19. Does he sleep at any time in the day or not? If he does is it the morning or afternoon?
20. Does he have any specific habit for recitation of Qur'an or not i.e. does he recite a specific amount everyday in Ramadan or not?
21. Is it his habit to recite to anyone or not?
22. Is most of his recitation by memory or while looking in the Qur'an?
23. What is his perpetual habit for iʿtikāf and has he performed iʿtikāf for more than ten days e.g for forty days?
24. Is there any difference between the last ten days and the rest of Ramadan?
25. Is there any other specific habit worthy of mention? Please, if you could give a detailed reply and if possible, could you ask of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdād Allāh's devotions [for the month of Ramadan] and send that also? If we could learn of his devotions it would be excellent since no one [amongst the remaining elders] is more informed of the devotions of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdād Allāh than Ḥaḍrat [Ḥaḍrat Thānwī]. I know this is difficult, but the routines and devotions of our elders, being a most enlightening example for all the helpers, will be of great benefit, Allah ﷻ willing.

The reply.
My friend, the respected one,
al-Salāmu ʿAlaikum wa Raḥmat Allāh,

I received your blessed letter. I myself was not aware of some, in fact, most of Ḥaḍrat's devotions for the month of Ramadan so I was forced to present the letter to Ḥaḍrat, who said, "Tell him that he can write to me directly if he wishes to know." This reply is for your information. Since I am in iʿtikāf, I am writing with a pencil, please forgive me.

wa al-Salām
ʿAzīz al-Ḥasan *ʿufia ʿanhu*

The letter is not postdated but I did finally learn of Ḥaḍrat's devotions after some research [which will come under its own section].

DEVOTIONS OF ḤAḌRAT SHAIKH KHALĪL AḤMAD SAHĀRANPŪRĪ

When I published the questionnaire, some friends wished and I myself thought it would be excellent to use the questionnaire as a method of discussing Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī's devotions, though it has been previously narrated briefly in *Tadhkirat al-Khalīl* and *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān*. I wish to use the question-answer format to highlight his devotions for the Ramadan of 1328 to 1345/ September, 1910 to March 1927 [Ḥaḍrat Shaikh accompanied his Shaikh throughout these Ramadan] except for the Ramadan of 1334 Hijri/1916 when he was in Makka and I in Sahāranpūr.

1. Ḥaḍrat always wore a watch and though someone was permanently assigned to keep it synchronized throughout the year, he was especially meticulous about keeping his watch in sync with the post office and telephone time[50] during the month of Ramadan.
2. He did his ifṭār two to three minutes after the time on the timetable. This was also Ḥaḍrat Raipūrī's habit because sunrise

50 In those times, the most accurate timetable was kept by the governmental agencies that ran the post office and telephone services.

and sunset was clearly visible in Raipūr and because of that he synchronized his watch with direct observation of sunrise and sunset. My father [Shaikh Yaḥyā] and uncle [Shaikh Ilyās] both never followed the timetable or watches. They followed the hadith, *when the night comes and the day withdraws*.[51] Their sights were always on the sky.

3. Dates and Zamzam were important in ifṭār. People who came in from hajj gave dates and Zamzam as gifts for Ḥaḍrat, which were saved for Ramadan. A certain amount of Zamzam was specially saved for Ramadan, but the dates were served if they started going bad. At the time of ifṭār, he drank a half to three quarters cup of milked tea, and the rest was handed to me.
4. There was a ten minute interval between ifṭār and ṣalāt so that people could eat ifṭār at home and come in time for ṣalāt.
5. Ḥaḍrat's habit was to eat ifṭār in the school. In Madina, his ifṭār was in Madrasa 'Ulūm al-Shari'a.
6. Approximately 15 to 20 helpers were present with Ḥaḍrat in ifṭār.
7. Dates and Zamzam were important in ifṭār.
8. There was no difference in the number Ḥaḍrat prayed after Maghrib, though the way he prayed his ṣalāt was certainly different; he took longer than his normal habit.
9. He generally recited one and a quarter part, reciting the same part in Maghrib which he then recited in tarāwīḥ.
10. Ḥaḍrat ate dinner at home after he completed his voluntary ṣalāt. He took about 20 to 25 minutes in voluntary ṣalāt. He ate much less than in the other months.

The custom [in Kāndhla and Gangoh] was that we never ate pilaf in seḥr but actually avoided it, since it was considered to increase thirst when fasting. The first time I ate pilaf in seḥr was at Ḥaḍrat's place in Sahāranpūr. It has never been my habit to eat anything in ifṭār because it becomes difficult to recite Qur'an in tarāwīḥ. But when I

51 Muslim, *Bayān Waqt Inqiḍā' al-Ṣaum*.

was young and in good health, I filled myself up in seḥr. Once, the subject came up in Ḥaḍrat's gathering that Zakariyyā does not eat in ifṭār. Ḥaḍrat replied, "How is he going to eat in ifṭār, when his habit is to eat no more than is required to keep himself alive."

11. Aside from the last two years of Ḥaḍrat's life in which time he became frail and sick, he always led the tarāwīḥ himself. After the Dar al-Ṭalaba [old complex] was built, my father [Shaikh Yaḥyā] led the tarāwīḥ in the first year under Ḥaḍrat's orders. After that, it was Ḥaḍrat's routine to lead tarāwīḥ himself.

12. It was his habit to finish the Qur'an on the 29th. He recited 1¼ part the first few days and then one part until the end.

AN AMAZING INCIDENT ABOUT SHĀH ʿABD AL-QĀDIR IN TARĀWĪḤ

It is known about Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir[52] that he recited two parts on the first of Ramadan if it was 29 days, and one part if it was thirty. After Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz[53] led tarāwīḥ in his masjid, he sent out a person to investigate, asking "Did my brother recite one part or two today." If he recited two, he [Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz] would say, "This Ramadan will have twenty-nine days."

This is clairvoyance [*kashf*], not knowledge of the unseen.

13. After tarāwīḥ, Ḥaḍrat rested for 15 to 20 minutes in the school. At this time, his helpers massaged his feet and they dis-

52 Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir Dehlawī (1754-1815) was Shāh Walī Allāh's third son. He spent forty years of his life in i'tikāf in the masjid and was the first to translate the Qura'n into Urdu.

53 Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Dehlawī (1746-1824) was the eldest son of Shāh Walī Allāh Dehlawī. He was talented as a a jurist, hadith master, and exegete. He was also outstanding in verse and prose and was a talented archer, horseman, and calligrapher. In taṣawwuf, he was a successor of his father and combined the beautiful qualities of fortitude, kindness, humility, and love etc. The Shiites made two attempts to poison and kill him after he wrote, *Tuḥfa Ithnā' 'Ashariyya,* a comprehensive treatise on Shiism. It is said that his funeral prayer was prayed fifty-five times.

cussed with Ḥaḍrat anything from tarāwīḥ e.g. if someone had corrected Ḥaḍrat incorrectly in tarāwīḥ or other such issues. Ḥuffāẓ came from far away to listen to Ḥaḍrat in tarāwīḥ.

After I led tarāwīḥ, sometimes in Ḥakīm Isḥāq's masjid and sometimes when Amma Jī [Ḥaḍrat's Sahāranpūrī's wife] insisted, in Ḥaḍrat's house, I rushed to catch tarāwīḥ behind Ḥaḍrat. By that time, Ḥaḍrat had usually completed four to six rak'as, since tarāwīḥ started early in Ḥakīm Isḥāq's masjid and late [where Ḥaḍrat led] in the school and in Dār al-Ṭalaba. And then I also recited really fast. Once, Ḥaḍrat started Sūrat al-Ṭalāq and recited the first aya,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ

I quickly corrected him,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوْا إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاء

Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Ḥussain was Ḥaḍrat's main listener. He came every year from Ajrāra to spend Ramadan in Sahāranpūr. My uncle [Shaikh Ilyās] and Shaikh 'Abd al-Laṭīf were also standing behind Ḥaḍrat at the time. They all said in unison,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ

After tarāwīḥ, Ḥaḍrat laid down for a short while.

"Maulwī Zakariyyā, were you sleeping?" he asked.

I said, "No, not at all, Ḥaḍrat. But I thought that if all the verbs in the aya are plural it must be *Yā Ayyuha Alladhīna Āmanū* not *Yā Ayyuha al-Nabiyy*?" Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī replied,

"You use analogy in the Qur'an?" I said,

"Ḥaḍrat, it's the rules of philology [*naḥw*] not analogy."

Once during tarāwīḥ Ḥāfiẓ Ḥussain made a mistake in correcting Ḥaḍrat. I corrected him immediately thereafter. Ḥāfiẓ Ḥussain realized he had made a mistake and said, "*hāń* [that's

right, in Urdu vernacular] and then repeated my correction. In the interval after tarāwīḥ I asked Ḥaḍrat,

"Did you take my correction or Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusain's?"

What I meant was that Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusain's ṣalāt broke by saying *hān* so if Ḥaḍrat took his correction, I would stand up and announce that everyone's ṣalāt must be repeated. Ḥaḍrat understood my point. He said,

"You think I am crazy that I would take his correction?"

Ḥaḍrat made such witty remarks at this time; sometimes he discussed the fine points of different ayas.

14. After tarāwīḥ, he rested for a short time as mentioned above, and then went home and sat with his family for 15 to 20 minutes. He advised some women of the neighborhood on matters of Dīn at this time, then slept for 2 ½ to 3 hours.

15. It was his routine to recite two parts in tahajjud. At times, he recited more or less depending on how much time he had. When the hadith of *naẓāir*[54] came up during the writing of *Badhl al-Majhūd*, Ḥaḍrat said to me, "Note this hadith down, we will recite it in tahajjud today." This is an example of love for the Sunna of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

I have heard that it was Shaikh al-Hind's habit to pray two rak'a of voluntary ṣalāt while sitting after witr. Somebody said, "You will only get half the reward if you sit." Ḥaḍrat replied, "That is true brother, but my heart is more into following the Sunna of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, though I may not gain the full reward."

54 The Blessed Prophet ﷺ would recite in pairs. He recited Sūrat al-Raḥmān and Sūrat al-Najm in one rak'a and Sūrat al-Qamr and Sūrat al-Ḥāqa in the second, then Sūrat al-Ṭūr and Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt in one rak'a and Sūrat al-Wāqi'a and Sura Nūn in the second, then Sūrat al-Ma'ārij and Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt in one rak'a and Sūrat al-Muṭaffifīn and Sūrat al-'Abas in the second, then Sūrat al-Muddaththir and Sūrat al-Muzzammil in one rak'a and Sūrat al-Dahr and Sūrat al-Qiyāma in the second, then Sura 'Amma and Sūrat al-Mursalāt in one rak'a and Sūrat al-Dukhān and Sūrat al-Takwīr in the second. This was according to the book [*muṣḥaf*] of 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd ﵁. [Abū Dāwūd, *Taḥdhīb al-Qur'ān*]

It is true that he will only get half the reward from the Shari'a point of view but considering his deep love for the Sunna, I personally believe he will gain more than the reward of praying voluntary ṣalāt while standing.

It is said that Majnūn even showed his affections for the dogs that lived in the city of his beloved Lailā.[55]

16. Depending on the season, he would wake 2 to 3 hours before dawn and eat seḥr half an hour before dawn. He took no more than 15 to 20 minutes in seḥr i.e. 15 to 20 minutes before dawn.

17. His seḥr was not anything special but sometimes someone gave him vermicelli [pheniāń] that was soaked in water and then fed to the whole family. Ḥaḍrat also took a spoonful or two. Pilaf was cooked occasionally for seḥr in Ḥaḍrat's home but never for ifṭār. Maybe I have written somewhere earlier that before Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī came, eating pilaf in Kāndhla and Gangoh was a sin because the people of Kāndhla and Gangoh believed it made one suffer from thirst while fasting. Though since I started eating with Ḥaḍrat and was young, I ate pilaf in seḥr. For the past 10 to 12 years the number of guests has increased so I eat pilaf, meat, and chappati in ifṭār and also sweet rice in seḥr. Fresh chappati was made at Ḥaḍrat's for seḥr, and he customarily drank tea at that time. I don't remember ever drinking tea for seḥr since I stayed awake the nights of Ramadan, though I have been unable to keep it up for the past 7 to 8 years. Sickness has now forced me to forego everything.

18. Ḥaḍrat prayed his Fajr shortly before sunrise in Ramadan and 10 to 12 minutes earlier in other months.

19. It was Ḥaḍrat's habit to perform aurād (uttered devotions) throughout the year between Fajr and sunrise in his room except when it was hot. In that case, he sat and completed his aurād on a straw-twined bed in the courtyard of the old school. He closed the doors of the room before he started the aurād and also performed his meditation at this time. His habit before

55 An epic love story like that of Romeo and Juliet.

1335/ 1916 was that he held his class for *Bukhārī* and *Tirmidhī* after sunrise until noon. After 1335/ 1916, he wrote *Badhl* between 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. throughout the year except in Ramadan, when he rested for an hour after sunrise. In the summer, he rested first then wrote *Badhl* between 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. but in the winter he wrote *Badhl* first between 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. then rested until the adhān of Ẓuhr.

20. Ḥaḍrat always led tarāwīḥ in Ramadan until two years before he passed away. After Ẓuhr, he recited the part which he recited in tarāwīḥ to Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusain Aḥmad Ajrārwī, who came specifically for this purpose to Sahāranpūr. Sometimes I listened to his part when Ḥāfiẓ Ṣāḥib wasn't there, though I was in charge of listening to Ḥaḍrat's part after Ẓuhr while in Madina. When I returned from Hijāz and *Badhl* was completed, Ḥaḍrat recited his part after Ẓuhr to his wife. The same part recited after Ẓuhr was repeated in voluntary ṣalāt and then in tarāwīḥ.

21. Before Ḥaḍrat went for hajj in 1333/1914, he and my father recited the same part to each other which Ḥaḍrat later recited in tarāwīḥ. Ḥaḍrat never recited the Qur'an with anyone besides my father.

22. I observed Ḥaḍrat reciting from the Qur'an only occasionally.

23. I never knew Ḥaḍrat to miss the last ten days of i'tikāf in his life, with the exception of the last two years when he was extremely ill. He performed i'tikāf in Masjid Qadīm until the student dormitory was built in 1335/1916. He did not suspend his work on *Badhl* during the last ten days, instead whatever books he required were brought to the room near Masjid Kulthūmiyya. I took these books into the masjid after Fajr and returned them after he finished studying. I never saw Ḥaḍrat perform i'tikāf except for in the last ten days.

24. I never observed any difference in Ḥaḍrat's schedule between the first twenty and the last ten days of Ramadan except that he woke much earlier during the last ten days. I have already written, though briefly, in *Fadā'il-e-Ramaḍān* that there was no noticeable

difference in the daily routines between Ramadan and other months in my Ḥaḍrat and Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm al-Ummat's [Ḥaḍrat Thānwī] khanqā. On the other hand, there was a clear difference between Shaikh al-Hind and Shaikh Raipūrī's khanqā. I have already mentioned this in *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān*.

Another noticeable difference besides that which has been mentioned above was that Ḥaḍrat never read the newspaper in Ramadan [he did occasionally in other months]. In fact, besides the two years in which he recited with my father, Ḥaḍrat always carried beads in his hand, quietly reading his aurād. The only time he talked was when one of the helpers had a question.

Some people came to stay for 10 to 15 days, like Mutawwalī Jalīl and Mutawwalī Riyāḍ al-Islām. They came from Kāndhla and Mīrat to spend Ramadan with Ḥaḍrat, but never performed i'tikāf with him in order to be able to spend Eid with their families. In one place in *Tadhkirat al-Khalīl,* Ḥaḍrat's Ramadan devotions are written as follows:

Once the moon was sighted in the month of recitation and revelation of Qur'an, Ḥaẓrat's worship intensified. He recited one and a quarter part in tarāwīḥ. He finished his rak'a after each segment [*rukū'*- every sura of Qura'n is divided into segments so that if one segment is recited in each rak'a, the Qura'n will be completed by the 27th of Ramadan-translator] and completed the Qur'an on the 27th. After teaching in Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm, he led tarāwīḥ in the masjid of the old school until the student dormitory was built, after which he led the tarāwīḥ in the masjid of the student dormitory and then for two years in the old school masjid.[56]

Many people came to listen to Ḥaḍrat's Qur'an and many others arrived from far-flung places to spend Ramadan with him. In fact, some ḥuffāẓ cancelled tarāwīḥ in their masjids in order to listen to

56 After the student dormitory was built, my father led tarāwīḥ the first year and then Ḥaḍrat until the last two years. During that time, Ḥaḍrat also performed his i'tikāf in the masjid of the student dormitory [Zakariyyā].

Ḥaḍrat. Ḥaḍrat recited in a medium tone and paused at each aya in order to enable listeners to understand each and every word.

Since Ḥaḍrat had memorized Qur'an at an older age and was deeply engrossed during recitation, he occasionally stumbled, but never recited incorrectly. If he stopped suddenly as happens when reciting in tarāwīḥ or he confused two assimilated ayas [*mutashābihāt*], one of the ḥuffāẓ quickly corrected him. If he was corrected wrongly, he ignored the incorrection and then corrected the mistake himself or was picked up by another ḥāfiẓ. In any case, Ḥaḍrat never got irritated with one who mistakenly corrected him [as often happens in tarāwīḥ]; but on the contrary, he reassured [the embarassed ḥāfiẓ who had incorrectly tried to rectify his recitation] him, saying that, "If the recitor can make a mistake then why can't the listener? It's only understandable that if the listener is mistaken he will correct the recitor wrongly."

Ḥaḍrat led tarāwīḥ most of his life until he was seventy. After that, he could continue no longer. He would say, "I bow and think I will never be able to stand for the next rak'a, but then I force myself up for the next rak'a. In every rak'a [in tarāwīḥ], I feel as if I am going to fall in every rak'a and standing up from prostration is harder than climbing a high mountain." Still, he led tarāwīḥ for two years in this manner and struggled to lead tarāwīḥ for as long as possible. In the end when he became extremely weak, he finally stopped. In place of tarāwīḥ, he listened to others and spent all his free time reciting Qur'an. In Ramadan, he recited Qur'an immediately after sunrise until 11 a.m.[57]

This whole routine of Ḥaḍrat as compiled by his biographer, Shaikh Mīratī, is before he began his work on *Badhl*. It was Ḥaḍrat's habit to recite one part after Ẓuhr to Ḥāfiẓ Ḥussain, who came for this purpose every Ramadan, as has been mentioned previously. After 'Aṣr until ifṭār, he stayed in the old school, and his helpers gathered around him at the time [it was a silent gathering]. I saw

57 Tadhkirat al-Khalīl.

Ḥaḍrat recite Qur'an with my father for two years in the gathering after 'Aṣr, but never with anyone else. In the middle and last ten days of Ramadan, I saw my father recite three parts in tahajjud, something I never saw anyone else do.

Ḥaḍrat also recited one and a quarter part in the voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib. In the Ramadan of 1345/ March, 1927, I listened to one and a quarter part in the voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib. Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir and Shaikh Syed Aḥmad [brother of Shaikh al-Islām Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī] were also in this congregation. Due to his sickness, Shaikh Raipūrī sat for the voluntary ṣalāt but Ḥaḍrat, despite his old age and weakness, led standing.

Ḥaḍrat always attended the completion [*khatm*] of Qur'an of the children from the Mīrat family [Ḥāfiẓ Faṣiḥ al-Dīn, Hājī Wajih al-Dīn, and Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Ṣāḥib] because of their close connections with Ḥaḍrat. They made sure the child completed his Qur'an the night of the 20th of Ramadan so Ḥaḍrat could return [from Mīrat] and sit in i'tikāf. Thus, Ḥaḍrat arrived in Mīrat on the morning of the 19th and returned on the morning of the 20th. Ḥaḍrat first prayed obligatory ṣalāt in the masjid, then returned to the house and prayed tarāwīḥ and witr behind his own imam. Then, he returned to the masjid to attend the ceremony [of completion of Qur'an]. Though tarāwīḥ was started late on the day of the ceremony [in the masjid], they sometimes had to wait in the last four rak'as for Ḥaḍrat to arrive at the masjid [i.e. because Ḥaḍrat's tarāwīḥ was long].

What Shaikh Mīratī wrote is true that after completing *Badhl* in Ramadan of 1345/March 1927, the time Ḥaḍrat previously spent on *Badhl* was now spent in reciting Qur'an or reading *Wafā al-Wafā*.[58] After Ẓuhr, Ḥaḍrat recited one part to Amma jī in the women's quarters. I couldn't be with Ḥaḍrat at that time because of the veil [between herself and me]. It was extremely hot and the women's quarter was located in the upper story, while the helpers resided in the ground floor where all the food was cooked. Shaikh Mīrati wrote:

58 An excellent book on the history of Madina by 'Allāma Samhudī.

Ḥaḍrat overexerted himself and spent so much time reciting Qur'an that Shaikh Syed Aḥmad and Maulwī Zakariyyā finally begged him,

"You need to give yourself some rest." Ḥaḍrat retorted,

"What work is left to be taken from it that I should give it any rest." Once he said, "The weakness is affecting my memory and I am scared I may forget my Qur'an. This is why I put so much effort on the Qur'an." Once he said, "It doesn't matter whether my mind stays or goes but I can never let the Qur'an go."

Ḥaḍrat's last Ramadan was unforgettable. His diet was one cup of tea and barely half a chappati, while he increased the time he spent reciting or listening to Qur'an. In the morning, he recited one and a half part, and then recited continuously from Ẓuhr to 'Aṣr, either from memory or from the Qur'an. After Maghrib, he recited one and a half part [to Zakariyyā] in voluntary ṣalāt, then prayed 'Ishā in the Blessed Precinct. After 'Ishā , he went to Shaikh Syed Aḥmad's school and listened to the Qur'an of the teacher of Qur'an, Qārī Muḥammad Taufīq, in tarāwīḥ. Qārī recited two parts of Qur'an slowly and finished tarāwīḥ at 5 p.m., Arab time [11 p.m.]. Ḥaḍrat told Maulwī Zakariyyā,

"Wake me at 8 p.m. [2 a.m.]." Maulwī Zakariyyā says,

"I found him asleep only two times, otherwise Ḥaḍrat was either performing ablution or was in the bathroom."

At this time, Ḥaḍrat listened to two parts of Qur'an. Ḥaḍrat liked the reading of Nāfi', so two students recited one part each according to the reading of Nafi'.

In his last Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat caught a fever on the 27th and felt numbness in his body that continued until the time of death. In Ramadan of 1338/ May 1920, the moon was sighted in the ship on the way to Ḥijāz. Despite vertigo and extreme fatigue, Ḥaḍrat stood for tarāwīḥ and recited the whole Qur'an. Maulwī Zakariyyā was with him on this journey. In the first eight rak'as, Ḥaḍrat recited a half a part while Maulwī Zakariyyā three quarters in the last twelve rak'as. When they reached Makka on the tenth of Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat prayed tarāwīḥ behind a Qārī and completed his

own Qur'an in voluntary ṣalāt. On this journey, they disembarked from Jeddah at exactly Maghrib time. Everyone was so exhausted it was difficult to pray the obligatory ṣalāt let alone tarāwīḥ. Despite that, Ḥaḍrat prayed some of his tarāwīḥ standing and some while sitting. What strength! It is easy to describe his beautiful outward qualities but, I swear by Allah ﷻ, it is not possible for me to express in words the extraordinary inner [spiritual] qualities he was blessed with. They are such as to truly leave me at a loss for words.

It is already mentioned in *Āp Bītī* [part 4] that Ḥaḍrat's vertigo was so severe he could not lift his head off the pillow. I experienced the same thing in my childhood, though I also had nausea and vomiting. The smell of the ship [especially during refueling when the pungent smell of fuel pemeated the whole ship] made me dizzy and then I would start to vomit. On the 29th of Sha'bān/ May 1920, Ḥaḍrat asked,

"Tell me, what are we to do about tarāwīḥ. " I replied,

"I can control the dizziness but what am I going to do if I vomit during tarāwīḥ, Ḥaḍrat."Ḥaḍrat said,

"Don't worry about that; if it happens, just go and perform ablution."

Despite his old age, enfeebled state, and the violent swaying common to small ships, Ḥaḍrat prayed his whole tarāwīḥ standing.

As Shaikh Mīrati mentioned previously, once they arrived in Jeddah, everyone was extremely exhausted and could barely stand. Al-Hāj Maqbūl [May Allah ﷻ forgive him] was angry with me. He said, "Don't make him [Ḥaḍrat] stand because he wants to, and look at his age and condition also." I was already fearful that al-Hāj Maqbūl might cut me off.[59] After all, it was because of him that I sat with Ḥaḍrat in dinner. He told me I must tell Ḥaḍrat that, "I don't

59 As al-Ḥāj Maqbūl was Shaikh Khalīl's main helper and also managed his affairs, he had clout with the Shaikh. This is why Shaikh Zakariyyā feared that he might find an excuse or way to force him [Shaikh Zakariyyā] to join another group thus separating Shaikh Zakariyyā from his shaikh.

have the strength to perform tarāwīḥ" but I didn't have the courage to say it. But when Ḥaḍrat asked, "Maulwī Zakariyyā, how are you feeling?" I said, keeping al-Hāj Maqbūl in mind, "I am really tired." I was shocked and regretful to see that Ḥaḍrat prayed the whole tarāwīḥ with ease and calm. I would steal glances at him and be filled with regret because of what I said. Many times I thought I should tell Ḥaḍrat that I said this because of al-Hāj Maqbūl but stayed quiet for fear of the consequences. I clearly remember that I came up to Ḥaḍrat a few times and wished to say "Ḥaḍrat, I said this because of your condition" but again, the thought of al-Hāj Maqbūl getting angry with me forced me back and I left the matter alone. To this day, I feel regretful and upset for what I said to Ḥaḍrat.[60]

DEVOTIONS OF ḤAḌRAT AL-HĀJ IMDĀD ALLĀH[61]

Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm al-Umma highlighted al-Hāj Imdād Allāh's devotions for Ramadan in his book *Imdād al-Mushtāq* that he [al-Hāj Imdād Allāh] said, "I tell you this for your benefit. This person [referring to himself] never slept most nights of his youth, especially in the blessed month of Ramadan. After Maghrib, two young boys, one Ḥāfiẓ Yūsuf [son of Ḥāfiẓ Ḍāmin] and my nephew Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad Ḥussain recited [i.e. they led Ḥaḍrat in voluntary ṣalāt] 1 ¼ part each until 'Ishā. After 'Ishā, two ḥuffāẓ recited one after the other until half the night and then two ḥuffāẓ one after the other in tahajjud. In essence, the whole night was spent in worship.

60 Due to Shaikh Zakariyyā's love for his shaikh, he felt guilty for excusing himself from leading him in tarāwīḥ, especially when he saw that his shaikh still ended up praying tarāwīḥ and his excuse for not leading in tarāwīḥ failed to fulfill its purpose.

61 Ḥājī Imdād Allāh (1817-1899) - was the shaikh of Shaikh Qāsim Nānautwī, Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, and Shaikh Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī. Though he was not a scholar Shaikh Qāsim called him an *'ālim garr* or maker of scholars. One can measure his spirituality by the work and lives of his three greatest successors.

DEVOTIONS OF SHAIKH RASHĪD AḤMAD GANGOHĪ

At the time when writing *Āp Bītī* [part 6] I narrated the devotions of Ḥaḍrat Gangohī under the section of exhaustive devotions. It is beneficial to reproduce that specific portion considering its relevance to the subject at hand.

Another thing written regarding the exhaustive devotions of Ḥaḍrat Gangohī was that people pitied him when they saw his devotions. When he was over seventy years old, he was performing worship almost all the time, fasting the whole day [when it was extremely hot in India-translator] and praying twenty instead of six rak'as of voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib. And the least he recited during this time was two parts of Qur'an. Also, his bowing and prostration were so long that people thought he was suffering from amnesia. After the voluntary ṣalāt, he completed many parts on his way home and while at home to eat. After a short while, he left for 'Ishā and tarāwīḥ, which took from one to one and a quarter hour. After tarāwīḥ, he rested anywhere between 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. and woke up without fail at 2:30 a.m. In fact, some of his helpers saw him performing ablution at 1 a.m. in the morning. During this time, he prayed tahajjud for 2½ to 3 hours. If anyone of the helpers came by at seḥr at 5:30 a.m. or so, they found he was still praying. After Fajr, he read his aurād and did his meditation until sunrise. He then prayed the post-sunrise ṣalāt and rested for a few hours. When the mail came in, he was busy again writing fatwas and responding to letters. He rested [*qailūla*] after the pre-noon ṣalāt. After Ẓuhr, the doors to his room were closed and he recited Qur'an until 'Aṣr.

Despite his old age, enfeebled state, and the severe pain due to sciatica[62] which forced him to stop for rest as he walked from the bathroom to his room [though it was only fifteen to sixteen steps], he prayed not only his obligatory ṣalāt but all his voluntary ṣalāt standing, and for hours on end. His helpers begged him numerous

62 Pain along the course of a sciatic nerve or its branches and especially in the leg caused by compression, inflammation, or reflex mechanisms; *broadly*, pain in the lower back, buttocks, hips, or adjacent parts. [Merriam-Webster]

times, "Ḥaḍrat, you can pray your tarāwīḥ sitting." But Ḥaḍrat's only answer to this was, "This is a sign of faintheartedness." What strength, Allah ﷻ is Glorified [*subḥān Allāh*]! Once cannot become a true successor of the one who said, "*Should I not be a grateful person,"* [the Blessed Prophet ﷺ] without such strength of īmān . Every type of worship was increased in the month of Ramadan, but the way he exerted him in reciting Qur'an was unbelievable; he didn't even spare time to talk while going to and from the masjid and home. Within the ṣalāt and otherwise, he completed approximately half a Qur'an each day. The night before the first day of Ramadan he would announce to the gathering, "The gathering is dismissed from today onwards. What a pity if a man wastes the blessed month of Ramadan." His diet despite all this worship and devotion was barely more than five kilos of wheat for the whole month of Ramadan.

In another place in *Tadhkirat al-Rashīd,* Ḥakīm 'Isḥāq Nahturī, successor of Shaikh Gangohī, noted the devotions of Ḥaḍrat Gangohī. He writes:

He came out late from his private room in the month of Ramadan. In the winter, he usually came out at about 10 a.m. His voluntary ṣalāt*,* recitation of Qur'an, meditation, and silence exceeded that of other days. He slept, rested and talked very little. After Maghrib, he secluded himself for a short while, then came to eat. He led the tarāwīḥ in the beginning of Ramadan but stood behind his son, Maulwī Ḥāfiẓ Ḥakīm Muḥammad Mas'ūd Aḥmad, in the last part. After witr, he prayed two long rak'as while standing. From a few words I overheard, I understood that he recited Sūrat al-Mulk, Sura Sajda, and Sūrat al-Dukhān in these two rak'as. He also fasted most of the first ten days of Dhu al-Ḥijja, the 10th of Muḥarram, and half the month of Sha'bān.

My father narrated the incident many times:

"In the last Ramadan of Ḥaḍrat's life, I led him in tarāwīḥ [Ḥakīm Mas'ūd had excused himself for some reason]." My father often said,

"Many days prior to Ramadan Ḥaḍrat started saying that, 'Ḥakīm Masūd is unable to lead, who is going to lead us in tarāwīḥ?'" My father said,

"I heard Ḥaḍrat but didn't have the courage to say I would lead out of propriety." Two days before Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat said,

'Maulwī Yaḥyā, you are a ḥāfiẓ too.' I said,

'Ḥaḍrat, I am a ḥāfiẓ, but I recite in Persian [i.e. my recitation is not good-translator] and Ḥaḍrat is used to Ḥakīm Masūd's recitation, who is an excellent recitor.' Ḥaḍrat replied, 'No, that's not true. I have heard your Qur'an. Now only you will lead the tarāwīḥ. '" My father would say,

"The first day was hard. It was the first time since I became ḥāfiẓ at the age of seven that I opened the Qur'an to recite one and a quarter part. This is because when I became a ḥāfiẓ, I completed one Qur'an, reciting from it, everyday for six months continuous." He also often said,

"The first day, I recited one and a quarter part in the Qur'an. By the second day my fear was gone, and then I never needed to open the Qur'an again."

THE DEVOTIONS OF SHAIKH MUḤAMMAD QĀSIM NĀNAUTWĪ[63]

I could not find details about the devotions of Shaikh Nānautwī in Ramadan, and now there is no one to help me in this matter. Only this much is known: that he memorized the Qur'an in the Ramadan of 1277/ September, 1860 while travelling to Ḥijāz, memorizing one part per day and saying it that same night in tarāwīḥ. Shaikh Ya'qūb Nānautwī writes in *Sawāniḥ-e-Qāsmī* (biography of Shaikh Qāsim Nānautwī) that he departed for hajj in Jamāda al-Thānī 1277/ December, 1860 and reached Makka in the last few days of Dhu al-Qa'da/ May, 1861. After hajj, he went to Madina and returned to

63 Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautwī (1831-1879) - was the founder of the school of Deoband. He and Maulānā Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad were both classmates who studied under Maulānā Shaikh Mamlūk 'Alī, the greatest Islamic personage at the time. He wrote many great philosophical books like *Ajwiba Arba'īn* and *Qibla Numā*. The eight rules upon which he established Deoband and which he advised his successors to hold on to if they wished for the success of the school reveal the depth of his spirituality, understanding of human psychology, and love for the Dīn of Allah ﷻ.

Makka in Ṣafar/ August, 1861. He arrived in Mumbai in the beginning of Rabi' al-Awwal/ September,1861 and arrived home in Jamāda al-Thānī/December, 1861. He boarded a sailing ship from Karachi for hajj and began memorizing Qur'an and reciting it in tarāwīḥ during his trip on the ship. After Eid, when he reached Al-Mukkala [port in South Yemen on the Gulf of Aden- translator] he bought sweets and gave it to friends to celebrate his memorization of Qur'an.

Before this, no one knew he had memorized the Qur'an. After he memorized the whole Qur'an, he would say, "I memorized the whole Qur'an in two years in Ramadan and did one quarter or a little more every day." After he completed memorization, he would recite a lot. I know that once he recited 23 parts in one rak'a. If anyone stood behind him, he completed his rak'a and then told the person not to stand behind him. He then stood again, alone this time, and spent the whole night reciting Qur'an.[64]

The most authentic opinion is that he memorized the Qur'an in one year while Shaikh Muḥammad Ya'qūb is of the opinion that he took two years. If he learned one quarter a day, it means that he probably memorized some parts of the Qur'an in increments of a quarter part in the first Ramadan and from then onwards one whole part until he completed memorization of the whole Qur'an in the next Ramadan while on his way to Ḥijāz.

DEVOTIONS OF SHĀH 'ABD AL-RAHĪM RAIPŪRĪ

The devotions of Shāh'Abd al-Rahīm are narrated in *Tadhkirat al-Khalīl* as follows:

Ḥaḍrat had a deep love for spreading knowledge of the Qur'an [he established twenty to thirty centers [*makātīb*] for beginners [usually small children] to learn to recite and memorize Qur'an-translator] in the Daun[65] region. He himself was in love with recitation of Qur'an and being a ḥāfiẓ, would spend almost the whole night reciting. In twenty four hours, night or day, he rarely slept more than an hour

64 Sawāniḥ-e-Qāsmī

65 All villages in the outskirts of the city of Dehradaun [India] are called Daun.

and became irritated when people came to meet him as it took time away from recitation of Qur'an. The only time people were allowed to meet him was between 'Aṣr and Maghrib [also, he gave one hour in the morning to guests from between 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. - Zakariyyā]. Other than that, without need or sudden emergency, he did not meet anyone. He closed the doors to his room and relished the fruits of reclusion and entreating and conversing with his Creator. He ate little in Ramadan, though his devotions and spiritual exertions increased drastically, so much so that people pitied his condition [the gathering between 'Aṣr and Maghrib was cancelled for the month of Ramadan -Zakariyyā]. In ifṭār and seḥr, he barely drank two cups of tea and half or one chappati. In the beginning of Ramadan, he led tarāwīḥ himself and finished between 2 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. except when he became too weak in the last days of Ramadan, when he listened to the Qur'an instead. Aside from his own recitation, he listened to three to four Qur'ans in tarāwīḥ. He forbade guests from meeting him as all his time was spent reciting Qur'an, [the number of guests that came to meet Shāh'Abd al-Rahīm Raipūrī was greatest in the month of Ramadan, but no one was allowed to meet Ḥaḍrat. People were only allowed to see him from afar while he was going to the masjid -Zakariyyā]. All correspondence was also closed during Ramadan; he never read or listened to even a single letter. His diet was the remembrance of Allah ﷻ [in whichever way it was performed]. The strength he gained from dhikr of Allah ﷻ was such that could not be gained from *dawā musk* and *jawāhir muhra* [two herbal medicines taken to gain strength].

As has been mentioned previously, the number of guests was greatest in the month of Ramadan. But all these guests were true seekers of Allah ﷻ who themselves had no time to meet with anyone. His admirers could only see him from afar when he came and went to the masjid. Ḥadrat especially disliked the arrival of people whom he was forced to meet with [due to their social status-translator]. In *Āp Bītī* [part 4], I have written under the chapter of 'expressing our gratitude to Allah ﷻ', that in the last Ramadan of 1334/ July, 1916 of my father's life, I expressed my desire to Shāh

'Abd al-Rahīm Raipūrī of wishing to spend Ramadan with him. In response, he affectionately wrote back that the month of Ramadan is not for meeting or travel. Stay where you are and remember Allah ﷻ. Then, I asked him to at least allow me to come for the last ten days. I finally found his reply to this letter in my papers which I reproduced in *Āp Bītī* [part 4] that, 'the same reason for not coming in the beginning of Ramadan applies to the end but you and your father are lofty people, what can a person like myself say to you. I am only replying to this letter in this blessed month because it is your letter. As far as dhikr is concerned, continue whatever dhikr and ashgāl Shaikh has prescribed for you.' This letter is narrated in full in *Āp Bītī*, but I remember my father saying to me, "Don't go; Ḥaḍrat's focus will be diverted because of you and he will always be concerned for your food and drink." I have narrated the whole incident in detail in *Āp Bītī*.

DEVOTIONS OF THE SHAIKH OF HIND, MAḤMŪD AL-ḤASAN[66]

There is some mention of Shaikh al-Hind's devotion in *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān*. Shaikh Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī writes in *Asīrān-e-Mālta*:

Ṭā'if[67] was in total chaos in the month of Ramadan. People could not leave their homes for food nor could any proper arrangements be made for tarāwīḥ in the masjid. The biggest masjid was Masjid Ibn 'Abbās. Sūrat al-Fīl [and other such suras] were recited in tarāwīḥ but few people ever came. Because of the cross-fire, most people prayed in their local masjids or at home. Shaikh prayed

66 Maulānā Maḥmūd Ḥasan Deobandī (1851-1920) - was the first student of Deoband. He taught all six books of hadith and other books also [on different subjects]. Though he wished to teach without salary Shaikh Rashīd Gangohī ordered that he take one. But when Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad passed away, he immediately declined any salary and taught without pay for the rest of his life. He was caught by the British for his covert activities against them and was finally sent off to the island of Malta. He died two years later.

67 A city southeast of Makka. These skirmishes occurred between Turkish forces and Arab Bedouins, [during World War I] the latter being incited by T.E. Lawrence [aka Lawrence of Arabia] to rise against the Ottoman Empire. The companion, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās ؓ is buried in Ṭāif.

tarāwīḥ in Masjid Ibn ʿAbbās during the first days of Ramadan but as the route to the masjid was dangerous, Ḥaḍrat put himself in serious danger by going to the masjid.

Then an incident occurred one night. He had just prayed Maghrib and began the voluntary ṣalāt, and darkness had come over when the Bedouins attacked a Turkish garrison [near the masjid]. A small squadron of Turkish troops was standing guard on the minarets and roof of the masjid and a few lay behind the barracks at the entrance of the masjid. The battle between the two was fierce and heavy firing continued for several hours. The inside of the masjid was also pockmarked with bullet holes. People stuck in the masjid huddled in one corner to protect themselves from stray bullets. Tarāwīḥ was not held on that day except for some men who gathered for ʿIshā and prayed in one corner. When the firing stopped and the situation calmed down, they rushed home. After that, his devotees begged him not to go to Masjid Ibn ʿAbbās and to pray in congregation in the neighborhood masjid next to where he stayed. Therefore, Ḥaḍrat prayed all five ṣalāt in the local masjid throughout the remainder of Ramadan.

This year tarāwīḥ was prayed with Surāt al-Fīl. After that, Ḥaḍrat stayed in the masjid praying voluntary ṣalāt throughout the night until seḥr. Maulwī Udhair Gul and I [Shaikh Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī] prayed voluntary ṣalāt in the same masjid individually. Since it was summer, the time of seḥr came quickly. We returned home and cooked seḥr [sweet rice most of the time] but as there was no sugar we used honey in the rice and tea. When we made rice we filled it with camel meat. Due to the conditions, it was difficult to get hold of rice and chappatti, and we were forced to pay eight times the price for chappatti. One of the businessmen of Dehli, al-Hāj Harūn, sent some premium quality rice as a gift for Ḥaḍrat, which helped us through. During that time [about two months], we spent some twelve *ashrafī* because of our situation.

Ḥaḍrat al-Hājj Syed Aṣghar Ḥussain Miāń Deobandī writes in *Sawāniḥ Shaikh al-Hind*:

His spiritual state in the month of Ramadan was unlike any. He did nothing but worship day and night. He rested in the day but spent most of his night, in fact the whole night, in listening to Qur'an [Shaikh al-Hind was not ḥāfiẓ- Zakariyyā]. He assigned various ḥuffāẓ to lead him in voluntary ṣalāt throughout the night and if they were not local, he provided them with a place, food and drink and took care of all their expenses. Sometimes he insisted upon having his Shaikh's son, Shaikh Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad [dean of 'Dār al-'Ulūm] recite and listened to him recite the Qur'an many times. Sometimes he assigned his trusted friend [both were murīds of the same shaikh] Ḥāfiẓ Anwār al-Ḥaqq, sometimes his younger brother, Maulwī Muḥammad Muḥsin, and at other times his beloved nephew Maulwī Muḥammad Ḥanīf. In the last years, Maulwī Ḥāfiẓ Kifāyat Allāh took over this duty and Ḥaḍrat listened to his recitation of the Qur'an.

After tarāwīḥ, Ḥaḍrat talked to the gathering for a long time. People enjoyed these gatherings in which Ḥaḍrat narrated stories of the elders and explained profound matters of taṣawwuf. Then if he had time, he slept for a short while, then awoke to perform voluntary ṣalāt again. One ḥāfiẓ completed two to four parts and went off to rest while Ḥaḍrat waited for the next ḥāfiẓ to arrive. In this way, Ḥaḍrat listened to many ḥuffāẓ throughout the night. The recitors changed but Ḥaḍrat stood in his spot. Sometimes, he listened until 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. and sometimes until seḥr. In some Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat prayed the obligatory ṣalāt in the masjid then returned to the house, where a congregation of his helpers stood waiting to pray tarāwīḥ with Ḥaḍrat. Sometimes, they completed four to six parts or even ten parts in tarāwīḥ. After tarāwīḥ, a ḥāfiẓ stood up to lead Ḥaḍrat in voluntary ṣalāt, and then this enchanting spiritual scene continued throughout the night. Ḥaḍrat's feet bloated from continuous standing and his devotees became concerned, but Ḥaḍrat was ecstatic that he had followed the Sunna of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, *to the extent that his feet would bloat*.[68]

68 Bukhārī, *Qiyām al-Nabiyy*.

Once, lack of food and sleep and standing the whole night made him extremely weak. His feet became bloated but the love of listening to the Qur'an never let him rest. He wished to continue listening to Qur'an as much as he could the whole night. In the end, when Ḥaḍrat's family became desperate, they called upon Shaikh Ḥāfiẓ Kifāyat Allāh and told him to excuse himself in order to make the voluntary ṣalāt short. Shaikh recited a little, and then complained of some pains. Ḥaḍrat was always concerned for the comfort of others; he immediately accepted and let him go. Shaikh Kifayat Allāh went to lie down while Ḥaḍrat continued praying. A while later he [Shaikh Kifāyat Allāh] felt somebody massaging his feet. When he looked up and saw it was Shaikh al-Hind he was shocked and immediately jumped off the bed, but Ḥaḍrat said, "Brother, don't worry. You were sick; this will help you feel better."[69]

After he returned the second time from Malta, Shaikh al-Islām Madanī writes of his last Ramadan:

In the blessed nights of Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat left for 'Dār al-'Ulūm [Deoband] after tarāwīḥ and all the students, teachers and staff gathered to enjoy the beautiful talks, fine points, and spiritual faiḍ of the shaikh of Hind. Ah! Who knew this was to be his last time.

DEVOTIONS OF ḤAKĪM AL-UMMA SHAIKH ASHRAF 'ALĪ THĀNWĪ

The following essay is taken from *Ma'mūlāt Ashrafia*:

Ḥaḍrat himself recites in tarāwīḥ most of the time except in cases of dire necessity. He recited one and quarter part until he reached half the Qur'an, then one part ever day, often finishing by the 27th of Ramadan. One must hear Ḥaḍrat's recitation for himself to understand the beauty of his recitation. He recites slowly [*tartīl*] and clearly, as is the habit in tarāwīḥ. If he ever needed to recite faster, it was as though he were reciting slowly, every word being pronounced and clear. Ḥaḍrat's way of recitating and pausing [between the ayas] is unique and inimitable. His memorization is so good he rarely stumbles in assimilated ayas and it seems as

69 Sawāniḥ-e-Shaikh al-Hind.

if he is reciting from an open Qur'an. If anyone asks where such and such an aya is in the Qur'an, Ḥaḍrat points it out immediately and without second thought. When Ḥaḍrat was in Kānpur and lead tarāwīḥ there [in his early days after graduating from 'Dār al-'Ulūm], the masjid would become so full that unless ifṭār was eaten quickly and then one rushed to the masjid, it was nearly impossible to find space. Prostrating after reciting the aya of prostration [*sajdat al-tilāwa*] was difficult because people sometimes broke their ṣalāt [i.e. the congregation became confused because people who were far from the imam thought he was bowing when he was prostrating]. Ḥaḍrat solved this problem by following the second opinion [of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*] in which he bowed immediately after reciting the aya of prostration. According to this opinion, the necessary prostration can be fulfilled in bowing without having to prostrate. Despite this, Ḥaḍrat kept all the rak'as the same length; it never happened that one rak'a became longer or shorter than the other because of reciting the aya of prostration.

In Ramadan, Ḥaḍrat broke his fast in the school [Ḥaḍrat's own madrasa] with the guests. The adhān was called exactly at Maghrib time. Without rushing, Ḥaḍrat opened his fast, washed his hands and mouth and then came to lead ṣalāt. Sufficient time was given between adhān and ṣalāt so that ablutions could be performed without missing the opening takbīr. People in the neighborhood also broke their fast at home and attended congregation with the opening takbīr. Ḥaḍrat completed his Maghrib ṣalāt with the routine aurād and then sat for dinner.

For 'Ishā, he stood in the masjid shortly before its time. In tarāwīḥ, he recited calmly and clearly. Between every four rak'as, he read the Sunna dhikr. His bowing and prostration were the same length as in the average ṣalāt. In tahajjud, Ḥaḍrat recited loudly and sometimes quietly. If Ḥaḍrat was in i'tikāf and was praying tahajjud, two to four people came and stood behind him. Though Ḥaḍrat never objected to them standing behind him, he also never made a point of praying tahajjud in congregation. In fact, once it happened that Ḥaḍrat woke up late. He recited according to his

routine in two rakʿas and said, "Perform your seḥr, and if you get extra time then pray tahajjud individually." After tahajjud, he rested until Fajr, then woke up for Fajr and continued his daily routine of the night and day.

Sometimes, Ḥaḍrat performed iʿtikāf. His iʿtikāf was either the last ten days or for any three days. If and when Ḥaḍrat performed iʿtikāf, it rained blessings and illuminations [*anwār*]. Ḥaḍrat continued his routine of writing during iʿtikāf. In fact, he wrote *Qaṣd al-Sabīl* during iʿtikāf in eight days and another book, *al-Futūḥ fī mā Yataʿllaqu bi al-Rūḥ,* during that same time.

Once I [Muḥammad Muṣṭafā] came to Thāna Bhawan on the 28th of Ramadan. I thought Qur'an was completed since most masjids finish by the 27th. I also observed no difference in the look or feel of the masjid or in the ambience of the congregation to assume differently. So I was sure that the Qur'an had been completed. Coincidentally, Ḥaḍrat started tarāwīḥ with Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā which confirmed my feeling [that the Qur'an was completed] since the imam recited from Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā the day after the Qur'an was completed in tarāwīḥ. But when Ḥaḍrat recited *bism Allāh* loudly before Sūrat al-ʿAlaq I thought maybe he was completing Qur'an today. I later found that was true. After completion, Ḥaḍrat led with a duʿā that was the same as the standard duʿā. Only one light kept the whole masjid illuminated, no other light was to be seen anywhere in the masjid [i.e. usually the masjids are decorated with colorful lighting on the day the Qur'an is completed- translator]. The number of people was the same as usual and no sweetmeat was distributed [all indications of Ḥaḍrat's simplicity, adherence to the Sunna, and aversion to innovation-translator]. One person requested Ḥaḍrat, "Ḥaḍrat, I wish to hand out sweet meat" but Ḥaḍrat did not allow him and said, "Not today, but you can do it tomorrow if you like." Ḥaḍrat did not blow [for blessings] on henbane seeds and continued reciting from the first few ayas of Sūrat al-Baqara to *hum al-mufliḥūn* on the day he finished Qur'an.

In another place, he writes Ḥaḍrat's daily routine as follows:

Ḥaḍrat usually wakes at midnight and occassionally in one sixth of the night or a little before or after for tahajjud. He mostly prayed

eight rak'as, but sometimes more and sometimes less. In Ramadan, he usually recited one part but sometimes more in tahajjud. When Ḥaḍrat prayed tahajjud, it seemed as if a ray of light like the light of dawn ascended upwards and white-colored flames flickered in Ḥaḍrat's limbs then rose towards the sky.[70]

Ḥaḍrat wrote an essay [look in first volume of *Ḥusn al-'Azīz* in *Malfūẓāt* section about Ramadan of 1334/ July, 1916] in which he explains why he changed his mode of dealing with people, being a disciplinarian at first but later adopting an exhortative style. In this essay, he writes:

The blessed month of Ramadan came with all its blessings and illuminations. My relations and communication with people is almost completely cut off in this month, especially this year, since I have become extremely sick and have discharged my Jumu'a talks and tarāwīḥ ṣalāt to others. Also, I have not started teaching any new lessons as I did in the previous Ramadan, neither did I prescribe dhikr and ashgāl to the murīds as I did last year. In this way, this year my Ramadan was truly reclusive, in which I had little contact with anybody. This is why it seemed better to implement this new resolution from this Ramadan. Thus, starting with the name of Allah ﷻ I change my mode from disciplinary to exhortation and ask for Allah's ﷻ help in this regard.

In another place, he says:

I eat a little less in ifṭār so that I may eat fully at the time of seḥr.

He also said:

I eat extra foods, things like mango etc. after tarāwīḥ so I don't have difficulty in ṣalāt. Sometimes, someone sends mangoes or *phaluriāṅ* [type of food] and then Ramadan is a month when a variety of dishes are cooked at home. In one hadith it says, *it is a month in which the sustenance of a believer is increased*.[71]

He further writes:

70 Ma'mūlāt-e-Ashrafī.

71 Shu'b al-Īmān, *Faḍā'il Shahr Ramaḍān* | Kanz al-'Ummāl, *fī Faḍl Ṣaum Shar Ramaḍān*.

I cannot perform any additional worship in Ramadan. The worship pale in my sight the way stars lose their brilliance when the sun rises. I cannot explain my condition and why I feel this way. The only explanation that comes to mind is that maybe the splendent light of the blessed month of Ramadan pales the brilliance of worship [because of which I do not feel like exerting myself in worship-translator].

After listening to the recitor in tarāwīḥ, Ḥaḍrat arrives at home and leads the womenfolk with four rak'as in which he recites his own Qur'an. By the time he finishes it is about 12 a.m. Then Ḥaḍrat wakes again for seḥr at 2:30 a.m. and does not sleep after that. Ḥaḍrat takes a long time to fall asleep and even when he is able to he does not sleep well. Ḥaḍrat has suffered from insomnia for a long time. These days, he barely sleeps two and a half hours. He himself says:

I barely sleep. If I wish I could easily keep myself awake the whole night and read something instead. The only thing that stops me from doing so is my base self [*nafs*], which then gets the chance to boast of having stayed awake the whole night.[72]

When someone asked him, "Isn't increasing worship in the blessed month against perpetualness of a good deed" [since the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, *"The most beloved deeds to Allah ﷻ are the consistent ones, even if they amount to little in quantity*[73]- translator).

Ḥaḍrat replied:

It is not against perpetuance to increase devotions in Ramadan because he [the worshipper] never intended to make it perpetual from the very beginning. It is mentioned in the hadith that the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ worship increased in the blessed month of Ramadan.[74]

Maulwī Ḥakīm Muḥammad Yūsuf Bajnorī writes in one place:

This year 1337/1919 I stayed in Thāna Bhawan and attended tarāwīḥ every day of the month of Ramadan. Ḥaḍrat himself

72 Ḥusn al-'Azīz.

73 Bukhārī, *al-Qaṣd wa al-Mudāwama*.

74 Anfās-e-'Īsā.

led the congregation in tarāwīḥ. He was strict upon the Sunnas, therefore I wished to narrate every aspect of Ḥaḍrat's tarāwīḥ for the readers to benefit from and practice upon. In the month of Ramadan, the adhān of 'Ishā was given one hour and forty minutes after sunset and the congregation stood 45 minutes later. The recitation was not long in the obligatory ṣalāt. It was mostly suras like Sūrat al-Ṭīn and Sūrat al-Fīl. In tarāwīḥ, he recited fluidly and slightly faster than in the obligatory ṣalāt, though every word was pronounced and clear and he was careful to follow the rules of pronunciation [*ikhfā* and *iẓhār* etc.] In the beginning, he recited 1½ part, and then one part after that until the Qur'an was completed on the 27th. Altogether, the obligatory ṣalāt, tarāwīḥ, and witr took one and a half hours and sometimes even less time. He read the ṣalāt and salām twenty-five times in every interval [*tarwīḥa*] between four rak'as in a slightly raised voice. When I asked Ḥaḍrat about it he replied, "The Shari'a doesn't prescribe anything so I read what I like and I recite it twenty-five times so that people get time to drink water or attend to there needs."

A short du'ā is made after tarāwīḥ then witr. If an aya of prostration is recited in tarāwīḥ, sometimes Ḥaḍrat would prostrate and sometimes he bowed.

Ḥaḍrat recited *bism Allāh* loudly before Sūrat al-'Alaq and recited Sūrat al-Ikhlās only once. When someone asked him about this, he replied, "The custom of reciting Sūrat al-Ikhlās three times is undesirable in the opinion of some scholars and permissible in the opinion of others. Therefore, to consider it desirable is a grave mistake. And the repetition of Sūrat al-Ikhlās in tarāwīḥ is mere custom."[75]

75 '*Ḥaḍrat recited bi Ism Allāh loudly before Sūrat al-'Alaq*' indicates Shaikh Thānwī's personal preference of reciting the *bi Ism Allāh* before Sūrat al-'Alaq. In the Ḥanafī *madhhab, bi Ism Allāh* is an aya of the Qura'n therefore it will be recited once loudly in order to complete the Qura'n.

'*The custom of reciting Sūrat al-Ikhlās*' refers to a custom of that time. Haḍrat Shaikh Thānwī explains that if an act is made desirable after being permissible only, it becomes an innovation. Therefore, Hadrat Thānwī recited it only once to eliminate the belief of it being desirable.

Ḥaḍrat has related his opinion on this subject in some detail. One of the things he mentioned is that the hadith says that Sūrat al-Ikhlās is one third of the Qur'an, not that reciting it three times gains the reward of the whole Qur'an. Shāh Muḥammad 'Ishāq made a brilliant point about this. He said that the hadith only indicates that a person gets the reward of one third of the Qur'an, meaning that by reciting it three times he gets the reward of three one thirds of the Qur'an. And reciting one third of Qur'an three times does not mean reciting the whole Qur'an. It is like a person reciting ten parts three times; nobody is going to call this recitation of the whole Qur'an.[76]

All praise is to Allah ﷻ that we were able to gain some knowledge of Ḥaḍrat Thānwī's devotions for the month of Ramadan.

There is a funny incident I would like to add here which has already been mentioned in *Āp Bītī*. As contemporaries, Ḥaḍrat Thānwī and my father had a very open relationship and joked with each other quite often. I remember some of their moments together. Once, in Ramadan my father went as a guest to Ḥaḍrat Thānwī's. My father asked Ḥaḍrat, "What is your routine for ifṭār?" Ḥaḍrat replied, "Once the alarm [for ifṭār] rings, I wait a few minutes for peace of mind." On that day, many more things were prepared for ifṭār because my father was visiting. My father looked at his watch then at the sky and began eating, announcing to Ḥaḍrat matter-of-factly, "You can wait for your peace of mind." All of my father's helpers also put their hands in the food and began to eat. Ḥaḍrat Thānwī and his helpers sat waiting. After one or two minutes, Ḥaḍrat commented, "By the time I get my 'peace of mind' there will be nothing left."

After tarāwīḥ, Ḥaḍrat asked my father, "What is your routine for seḥr?" My father replied, "I stop [eating] until I can't tell whether I am fasting or not [i.e. I eat to the last minute-translator] [my father was exaggerating otherwise he stopped three to four minutes before dawn- Zakariyyā]." Ḥaḍrat Thānwī said, "I stop one hour before dawn." My father said, "You eat in your time I

76 Ḥusn al-'Azīz.

will eat in mine. I can't fast for one and a half day." Ḥaḍrat Thānwī replied, "No, that's not right. We will eat together. I'll tell you what, you follow my routine for one day and be patient with me and I will do the same the next day for you." It was finally decided they will start 45 minutes before dawn, eat for 15 to 20 minutes, and stop half an hour before dawn.[77]

When I had written what I remembered up to this point, the principal of our school [Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm] Shaikh al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Asad Allāh [successor of Ḥaḍrat Thānwī] sent me a note that he knew some of the answers to the questions I sent to Khawāja 'Azīz al Ḥasan. They are as follows:

6. He performed ifṭār with the gathering

8. As far as I know, there was no difference [i.e. in the voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib] in Ramadan and outside of Ramadan.

9. He prayed six rak'as of voluntary ṣalāt sometimes while sitting. I once asked, "Ḥaḍrat, why do you pray while sitting?" He replied, "So I don't become arrogant." He never let anyone fan him during ṣalāt [as was the custom of some of the elders in that time-translator]. I asked him, "Why don't you allow someone to fan you during ṣalāt?" He replied, "It doesn't seem right in worship."

18. There was no difference in Ramadan and the other months. Ḥaḍrat always prayed Fajr shortly before sunrise time.

21. As far as I know, Ḥaḍrat never recited with anyone.

22. As far as I can remember, he usually recited from the Qur'an. He knew the Qur'an inside out. I have only seen two people whose memorization was so good that no one could compete with them in this matter, Ḥaḍrat Thānwī and Qārī 'Abd al-Khāliq.

Once Ḥaḍrat said, "My routine in Ramadan is the same as in other months. Some of the elders have different habits in their ifṭār in that that they break their fast with dates and Zamzam. My habit is to break fast with whatever is closer at the time of ifṭār, whether it is a date, Zamzam, warm water or guava."[78]

77 Āp Bītī, v. 4.

78 Ifāḍāt-e-Yaumiyya.

In *Majālis Ḥakīm al-Umma,* Muftī Shafī'narrated the routine of Ḥaḍrat for the Ramadan of 1347/ February, 1929. It is reproduced below for the benefit of the readers.

Muftī Shafī'writes:

This was the first time I had the opportunity to spend Ramadan in Thāna Bhawan [Shaikh Muḥammad Ṭayyib, principal of 'Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband was with me at the time]. People came to meet Ḥaḍrat from every part of the country throughout the year. Many of Ḥaḍrat's closest devotees and successors were scholars and students of the Islamic schools who could not spend time with Ḥaḍrat except in Ramadan, as it was their only break time. And since this month is for worship and devotions, hundreds of people came to spend the whole month with Ḥaḍrat.

Though it was against Ḥaḍrat's nature [he disliked crowds and large gatherings in the month of Ramadan and loved seclusion], he would say, "My friends, the scholars of knowledge do not get an opportunity at any other time so I have no choice but to allow this."

Every year the number of attendees grew. A few years before he passed away, everything was occupied, the rooms, the khanqā and all surrounding buildings and still more space was needed. They had to pitch tents in the courtyard of the khanqā. One year tents were pitched outside for lack of space.

Shaikh Muḥammad Ṭayyib was with me on my first visit in the Ramadan of1347/February, 1929. Shaikh Muḥammad Ṭayyib was not only a great scholar but also an excellent recitor of Qur'an. He reached Thāna Bhawan after completing his Qur'an on the 19th. In Deoband, people came from afar to listen to him recite in the masjid of the school [in Deoband].

We came to Thāna Bhawan in a period when Ḥaḍrat could no longer lead tarāwīḥ [due to weakness]. He left for his home after praying 'Ishā in congregation in the khanqā's masjid and recited the Qur'an in tarāwīḥ at home. His family and other women from the neighorhood came to pray behind Ḥaḍrat. Another recitor came to lead tarāwīḥ and complete the Qur'an in the khanqā's masjid.

When Shaikh Muḥammad Ṭayyib arrived, many of the people in the khanqā wished for him to recite the whole Qur'an in the last ten days. They presented the request to Ḥaḍrat asking, "After tarāwīḥ, can Shaikh Ṭayyib recite three parts every day in voluntary ṣalāt?"

Ḥaḍrat was deeply committed to fulfilling the rights of people and adherence to the Shari'a, both of which were intrinsic to his nature. He was passionate and strict about avoiding things that upset or restricted others in order to fulfill his own desire and fervor for worship [he also trained his murīds in the same way]. If he had allowed these people who made the request to pray in the khanqā masjid, there was a possibility that some would not want to attend for whatever reason, and would be forced to stay awake because of the ṣalāt. Either that or they would have no option but to join the congregation. For this reason, Ḥadrat did not allow them to congregate in the khanqā. At the same time, he recognized the sincerity and goodness of the requesters [who wished to listen to Qur'an and congregate for that purpose] and did want to dishearten them. Therefore, a small masjid nearby was chosen for this purpose. Whoever wished to congregate behind Shaikh Muḥammad Ṭayyib went there after tarāwīḥ. At that time, the khanqā masjid became silent. In this way, one Qur'an was completed in that masjid.

Nowadays, many ḥuffāẓ and recitors hold voluntary ṣalāt in the nights of Ramadan after tarāwīḥ and show no concern for the weak, sick, or people who return from a full day's work and wish to sleep at night. They suffer due to the insensitivity of such ḥuffāẓ and recitors. Some masjids even install loudspeakers for this purpose and disturb the sleep of the people in the neighborhood. All these things look and seem like worship, but are actually acts of sin, as they create hardship for others.

Ḥaḍrat Thānwī often said, "Worship of this kind is only desirable, whereas saving oneself from hurting another Muslim is necessary [*wājib*], and opposing a necessary act is a major sin."

We had a habit in Deoband that a few of us would sit in ca-

maraderie after tarāwīḥ. We sat, drank tea, and dicussed matters of interest. In Thāna Bhawan, when we returned from the second congregation [in the small masjid], Shaikh Ṭayyib and I kept up this habit in our room. The rule in the khanqā was that no one was allowed to do dhikr or recite loudly after tarāwīḥ until 3 a.m. in the morning so that those who awoke in the latter part of the night for tahajjud were not disturbed. There was no concept of camaraderie in the khanqā whatsoever; it was pindrop silence after ʿIshā. Our discussions after ʿIshā could be heard from far away. The people in charge of the khanqā were aware that we were Ḥaḍrat's special guests, so they ignored us for a day or two. On the third day, one of the in-charge stood some distance from the room and said loudly, "Talking after ʿIshā is forbidden in the khanqā." We then realized our mistake and went to sleep immediately after ṣalāt.

We observed this rule and the implementation of this rule in the khanqā. After some time, I read a narration of ʿUmar ﷺ and ʿĀ'isha ﷺ that ʿUmar ﷺ said to people who stayed awake and gossiped after ʿIshā, "*Go to sleep, maybe you will be able to pray tahajjud.*" A similar narration is attributed to ʿĀ'isha ﷺ.

Now, think about the fruits of such an oft-overlooked and simple rule. How can someone living in this blessed environment not become regular in his tahajjud? Such a person would not be able to survive without praying his Fajr in congregation.

In our times, the night begins at midnight. One friend says, "I know when it hits 12 a.m. in Karachi that something has hit."[79]

One effect of this irreligious mentality is that one becomes incapacitated from praying ṣalāt, especially Fajr. Even regulars for ṣalāt find it difficult to pray any ṣalāt on time, let alone the modernists

79 Muftī Shafīʿ is comparing the teachings and practice of Islam to modern mentality. The aḥādīth instruct one to sleep early in order that one can wake up in the night and pray tahajjud. The modernist, on the other hand, awaits the night so he can go to clubs and other such things. He refers to this mentality in the words of a friend, "*I know when it hits 12 a.m. in Karachi that something has hit.*"

who don't pray at all. Mājid Lāhorī [a poet] compares the old times with the modern one in two lines. First, the old times,

They pray Fajr, then recite Qur'an

And the modern times,

They wake up at nine in the morning and read Dawn[80]

It is important for those who care for their Hereafter to strive to change the environment of their gatherings and homes. A good environment is the key to becoming regular and helping friends and family become regular in their ṣalāt and fasting.

As Muftī Shafī' said, people left after tarāwīḥ for another masjid and the khanqā masjid became empty. This proves that Ḥakīm al-Umma permitted calling people to congregate for voluntary ṣalāt as not being undesirable [*karāha*]. Otherwise he would never have allowed them to pray the voluntary ṣalāt, let alone allowed it in another masjid.

DEVOTIONS OF AL-ḤĀJ SHAIKH ḤUSAIN AḤMAD MADANĪ

Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd A'ẓamī wrote a book on the Ramadan [1365/July, 1946] of Ḥaḍrat Madanī in Silhat [Bangladesh] which I have condensed below. Though this subject has been prolonged, the fact is that we do not find as much detail of the Ramadan of any of our elders as we do of Ḥaḍrat Madanī. It is for this reason that I wished to narrate at least some of Ḥaḍrat Madanī's Ramadan . He writes:

Ḥaḍrat stayed at Commissioner 'Abd al-Sattār's residence and prayed all five ṣalāt in a beautiful grand masjid about a quarter of a mile [440 yards] from the house. All the visitors and devotees came to this masjid from all over to spend the month of Ramadan with Ḥaḍrat. Since Ḥaḍrat spent the whole month in i'tikāf, he made the intention to stay for more than fifteen days [*iqāma*] [thus, praying full ṣalāt-translator] and was the imam for all the ṣalāts. After Ẓuhr, he blew on the dozens of bottles placed around the imam's place and then removed the notes that collected under the prayer rug

80 A daily English newspaper based in Karachi, Pakistan.

before Ẓuhr time. He pulled each note out one at a time and called the person [who had written it] forward, helped him with his need then pulled out the next one. He wrote *ruqya* (amulets written with ayas of Qura'n) for some and for those who requested for him bai'a, he told them to wait in one corner of the masjid. Once he finished with the notes he came to the people waiting for him and took them in bai'a'.

After a short talk and some advice he returned to the residence. Sometimes, he fell asleep immediately after; at other times , he recited the Qur'an and responded to any remaining letters. During this time, he also met with people privately. Usually by then it was time for 'Aṣr . Ḥaḍrat attended to his personal needs and left for 'Aṣr. After 'Aṣr, he recited one and a quarter part with Shaikh Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Jalīl [teacher at 'Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband]. They recited to each other quarter by quarter until one and a quarter part was completed. If they finished by Maghrib, Ḥaḍrat sat in meditation and others started their dhikr and ashgāl (meditative devotions).

Ifṭār consisted mostly of dates, Zamzam, pears, pineapple, bananas, guava, mangoes, *Baṣrī* dates, coconut water, papaya, sweet and regular rice, and fried eggs. It was hard to find the common Indian-style toasted rice and beans and other such things on the mats. I thought to myself that maybe these foods [Indian-style toasted rice and beans] are not common in these areas but later learned that they never put it in front of Ḥadrat because they considered it menial food. Despite all this, Ḥaḍrat's ifṭār was simple and small. The spirit and mood of ifṭār was lively and crisp. People were busy running here and there and there was much hustle and bustle [*there are two joys for the one who fasts*[81] - Zakariyyā] but Ḥaḍrat was in a state of absorption [*istighrāq*] and silent. The place of ifṭār was close to the masjid. After Ḥaḍrat had finished reciting with Shaikh Jalīl, his absorption was such that he sometimes needed to be informed that the adhān had been called [I saw this on many occasions in 'Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Many times, people sitting around Ḥaḍrat would be talking and

81 Bukhārī, *hal Yaqūl innī Ṣāim*.

arguing loudly about political affairs and suddenly he would say *haiń, haiń* (what, what?). Then I knew that Ḥaḍrat wasn't even with us-Zakariyyā]. Despite all the different things for ifṭār, as mentioned above, Ḥaḍrat took dates and Zamzam, a piece of fruit, drank some coconut water, and occasionally a cup or half a cup of tea but he never stood up from the mat until it was wrapped up. Sometimes, he cracked jokes at this time or made some witty remark. Ifṭār took 8 to 10 minutes, and then Ḥaḍrat led Maghrib with short suras, followed by two long voluntary ṣalāt in which Ḥaḍrat prayed for 1/2 hour. Then, the gathering or whoever was free from their devotion came and attended the du'ā Ḥaḍrat made after the voluntary ṣalāt. After that, if he was invited somewhere Ḥaḍrat went straight from the masjid to that place, otherwise he returned home.

Two types of mats were laid out at the time of ifṭār, one for Ḥaḍrat and those who ate chappati and the second for the guests who ate rice. Amongst Ḥaḍrat's helpers were his sons Shaikh As'ad, Arshad and Raiḥān. All three of his sons ate rice and sat on the second mat. Ḥaḍrat occasionally said, "I have two bengalis also, put some rice for them." There were a variety of different rice on the mat since most attendees were Bengalis, who love rice. *Parātha* [chappati prepared in clarified butter-translator] is a common dish here but [quite surprisingly] they have no idea what chappatis are or how to make them. Another necessary item besides meat was the dessert, usually something like *ḥalwā* or *shāhī tukre* [toasted bread prepared in saffron and syrup-translator], papayas, or sometimes gourd *sawayiāń* [vermicelli] prepared so well no one could tell it was made from gourd. Carved nepalian red peppers were also a necessary item on the mat. Though Bengal is known for fish, I wondered why there was no fish on the mats. Another vegetable dish like bamboo was also placed on the mat. Later we learned that this vegetable curry was made from the pulp of a genus of bamboo found only in Bengal.

As common amongst the Arabs, it was Ḥaḍrat's habit in Deoband and here that people sat in a circle around a large dish filled with curry. A cloth full of warm chappatis was placed next to Ḥaḍrat,

who handed them out as needed to the guests. If anyone left his plate full or unclean, Ḥaḍrat would clean it himself. If he saw any pieces of chappati on the mat he picked it up and ate it. After that, people picked up on this habit and started doing the same thing.

Ḥaḍrat sat on his knees. He held one chappati in his left hand and took small bite-size pieces from it as needed. He was the first to start eating and the last to finish. After dinner, everyone drank tea. These are the details of an invitation.

If there was no invitation, Ḥaḍrat left after ṣalāt for the residence. The food was prepared and laid out on the two mats, one for Ḥaḍrat and the chappati-eaters and the second for the rice-eaters. He usually finished quickly when he ate at his residence and then sat for a few minutes after. His devotees sometimes sat and discussed current affairs or juridical issues during this time. Ḥaḍrat also participated in the discussions and then rested for a short while.

As everyone knows, Ḥaḍrat's unique recitation and his concentration [*khushū*'] in ṣalāt was known in the Indian Subcontinent but also in Arabia and Ḥijāz. In Silhat, Ḥaḍrat lead tarāwīḥ himself. Hundreds of people came from all over to listen to Ḥaḍrat in tarāwīḥ and tahajjud and left the next morning for their homes [whatever has been written about Ḥaḍrat's recitation and ṣalāt is absolutely true. I have stood hundreds of time behind Ḥaḍrat in obligatory ṣalāt but never had the opportunity to spend time with him in Ramadan. Though I did listen to Ḥaḍrat's tarāwīḥ two times, the first time in Ramadan of 1363/August, 1944, when Ḥaḍrat was freed from Ilāhabād jail and arrived in the morning at Sahāranpūr on the 14th of Ramadan/ September 1, 1944 and took the train to Deoband immediately after. He stayed one night in Deoband and left for Dehli the next day [on a Monday] in the afternoon. Since my uncle died that year on the morning of the 21st of Rajab/ 04 July 1944, Ḥaḍrat arrived at the station after Maghrib and went straight to Niẓām al-Dīn to offer his condolences. At tarāwīḥ time, Ḥaḍrat said,

"Whoever is the imam for tarāwīḥ should lead." I said,

"Who has the courage to lead in tarāwīḥ when you are here. Only you will lead today."

Ḥaḍrat recited from half of the 14th part to the end of Sura Banī Isrāīl. He recited the part in twenty rak'as so calmly it was truly an enjoyable experience. The second time was in 1364/ 1954 in which Ḥaḍrat lead the first tarāwīḥ in the railway station of Sahāranpūr. On the morning of 29th of Sha'bān/ August 8, 1945, *Bukhārī* was completed at 4 a.m. That night, Ḥaḍrat came with his family on an omnibus from Deoband to Sahāranpūr, arriving at the station at 12 a.m. There, he led a large gathering of people in tarāwīḥ. As students, teachers, and city people finished their tarāwīḥ in their places, they gathered at the station and joined behind Ḥaḍrat to pray voluntary ṣalāt behind him. Ḥaḍrat told Zakariyyā,

"Stand by me, you are going to be my listener." I said,

"You think it's easy to correct you? There are many good ḥuffāẓ in the crowd. I will call one of them for you." Ḥaḍrat refused and I gained the honor of being Ḥaḍrat's listener]."

Since people came from all over, near and far, the masjid was full by the time the adhān was called and no space was left for latecomers. A small opening was made in the middle for Ḥaḍrat to pass through. When Ḥaḍrat entered, the caretaker of the masjid awaited Ḥaḍrat in front with a glass of water. This was because Ḥaḍrat drank tea at home then ate pān. Once he washed his mouth he set off in the car straight for the masjid. One or two people were always present to say takbīr loudly because of the scores of people and the growing numbers in the last ten days.

Two and a half parts were recited in tarāwīḥ. Shaikh Jalīl recited one and a quarter part in the first four rak'as while Ḥaḍrat repeated the same one and a quarter part in the next sixteen rak'as. The intervals were very long. Sometimes, while reciting Ḥaḍrat became passionate and an electric feeling passed through the crowd [a feeling known only to them]. Tarāwīḥ was followed by a long du'ā in which people sobbed, cried and trembled. Sometimes the whole masjid resonated with their cries.

After tarāwīḥ, Ḥaḍrat sat there with the devotees and his helpers to drink tea. After approximately ten minutes, he stood up and gave a talk. People who had prayed tarāwīḥ elsewhere also assembled in

the masjid to listen to Ḥaḍrat. The masjid was so full there was not an inch of space. In fact, people were standing outside on the street to hear the talk. Since Ḥaḍrat's voice could not be heard outside, a loudspeaker was installed. Thousands of people sat and were served tea quietly as the talk went on and not one person was left out who did not receive tea. People finished their tea by the time Ḥaḍrat finished talking. The talk was purely inspirational, the objective being to bring people closer to Allah ﷻ. Rarely was a political point raised except to liven up the talk. During the talk, Ḥaḍrat received notes that were read out to him. He would respond accordingly, sometimes in detail if need be. When Ḥaḍrat became sick in the middle of Ramadan, others took his place in delivering the talk. Though he was sick, Ḥaḍrat attended these talks and did not leave until they ended. One hour after the talk, people shook hands with Ḥaḍrat. Although every measure was taken to assure that Ḥaḍrat arrived quickly to the car, it took him some time to reach the car. After arriving at the residence, snacks were served and everyone who was present joined in this gathering. By the time the gathering ended, it was usually 1:30 a.m.

After that, Ḥaḍrat left for his room and if the need arose, talked privately to his confidants. Then Ḥaḍrat rested for half an hour and woke up for tahajjud [I saw many times and experienced how my Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī and Ḥaḍrat Madanī had complete control over their sleep. When they wished to sleep, they close their eyes and they were asleep. If they set a time to wake up, there was no need for an alarm or any person to wake them up, they would wake up at the appointed time on their own. I have mentioned this in *Āp Bītī*- Zakariyyā]. After he attended to his personal needs, he departed for the masjid for tahajjud. The people who came from afar usually reached the masjid before Ḥaḍrat or at least caught Ḥaḍrat in the first rak'as. Shaikh Jalīl and Ḥaḍrat both led in tahajjud.

Ḥaḍrat was careful about not making any noise or waking anyone up when he left for the masjid to pray tahajjud. However, usually people were already awake since they looked forward to

praying tahajjud behind Ḥaḍrat. Since little time was left after voluntary ṣalāt for seḥr, the mat was quickly laid out in the house and everyone ate swiftly with eyes fixed on the clock and ears listening for the adhān. Ḥaḍrat rested for a short time after seḥr and then prepared for Fajr. He departed for the masjid and led Fajr shortly before sunrise. In the last ten days, Fajr ṣalāt began at its beginning time and finished shortly before sunrise [i.e. the Fajr was very long-translator]. All the departees who prayed tahajjud with Ḥaḍrat came to meet him before he left for the house. When he arrived at the house, he lay down immediately and one or two of his helpers massaged his body while another massaged his head with oil. If Ḥaḍrat fell asleep while talking, the others would also leave to sleep. After a little rest, Ḥaḍrat woke up, attended to his needs, performed ablution and sat down to recite Qur'an. Then, people who had appointments with Ḥaḍrat started coming in at about 10 a.m. If Ḥaḍrat had any free time in between, he continued reciting or otherwise attended to the mail. Sometimes this continued to Ẓuhr and if any time was leftover, Ḥaḍrat rested half an hour before Ẓuhr.

This year Ḥaḍrat became extremely sick and ran a high fever from the middle of Ramadan. Seeing his condition, some of his helpers felt it was better that he not perform i'tikāf this year. They asked,

"Ḥaḍrat, you will have difficulty in i'tikāf." Ḥaḍrat replied,

"No, I have made the intention for i'tikāf."

Thus, Ḥaḍrat's place was set up in one corner of the masjid. Sometimes, he felt cold in ṣalāt due to the fever and wrapped a thick shawl around himself and the ceiling fans were turned off. In this condition, he drank a bit of tea during the interval and then stood up for ṣalāt again. He did the same in tahajjud, standing for long periods reciting Qur'an.

Ḥaḍrat was extremely sick and stayed in the house because of which the congregation that gathered for tahajjud was cancelled for four days. This increased the burden on Ḥaḍrat since he now had to recite more Qur'an in tahajjud in order to finish it within the last ten days. In addition, it was difficult for Ḥaḍrat to stay in

the masjid due to the noise and large number of people in i'tikāf. The half and hour rest he gained in the house was not possible in the masjid. Therefore along with all the devotions and worship, Ḥaḍrat had little time for rest while in i'tikāf.

In the last ten days the crowd was massive, even the street leading to the masjid was full. As the numbers grew, the number of notes placed under the rug and the people who wished to take bai'a also increased. The murīds and seekers of the path who wished to explain their spiritual situations and get instructions from Ḥaḍrat was the largest group waiting on Ḥaḍrat. To accommodate them, they were given numbers. As the the number was called out, the respective person went in. The departees who wished to meet Ḥaḍrat after Fajr was also very large. Once Ḥaḍrat had shaken hands with all of them he went into his quarter. After he rested for a short time, while others slept after a whole night of worship and devotion, Ḥaḍrat quietly tiptoed his way to the bathroom and started his devotions after ablution.

The number of people on the night of 27th of Ramadan, often thought to be the night of Qadr, was greater than on any other night of Ramadan. The number of notes coming in before Ẓuhr has also increased and the bottles brought in [to be blown into] surrounded Ḥaḍrat's praying area. As Ḥaḍrat raised his hands for du'ā after tahajjud, the whole masjid began weeping and crying. Ḥaḍrat's own spiritual state, his liveliness and passion, was such that it simply cannot be put in words.

On that night, people were discussing the night of Qadr in Ḥaḍrat's gathering. I [Shaikh 'Abd al- Ḥamīd] asked,

"The friends of Allah ﷻ can feel when it is the night of Qadr. Allah ﷻ knows best which day it was on this year."Ḥaḍrat replied,

"In my view, it was on the 23rd." After the moonsighting on the 30th [Wednesday], Ḥaḍrat left for his residence after Maghrib. On the night of Eid, Ḥaḍrat led everyone in the longest tahajjud of the holy month. Ḥaḍrat led the Eid ṣalāt at 9 a.m. the next morning.

THE DEVOTIONS OF SHĀH ʿABD AL-QĀDIR RAIPŪRĪ

Many incidences about Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī are related in *Āp Bītī*. I have spent more time with Ḥaḍrat Madanī and Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī than with any other amongst the elders; their affections and love for me are beyond my ability to put on paper. Hundreds of people are still witness to their special relations with me. Many people insisted I start working on their biographies, but I was so preoccupied with academic work that I could think of nothing else at that time even if I wanted to. Now, as I sit idle, the academic work at a halt due to my illness, I remember the events and incidents of the lives of the elders and I cry.

My beloved, my master, Shaikh al-Islām, Shaikh Madanī never asked me to spend time in Ramadan with him, but I could tell by his demeanor that that was his wish. And my spiritual benefactor and mentor Ḥaḍrat Raipūrī in his last years not only said it but insisted that I spend time in Ramadan with him. Though until his death my academic work[82] [*knowledge is the greatest hindrance*] was so overwhelming that I could not tolerate anything coming in its way.

Perhaps I have already mentioned somewhere in *Āp Bītī* that during the last few years Ḥaḍrat was so inundated with love for me that our separation was difficult for him to bear. When I wished to return to Sahāranpūr after one or two days in Raipūr, and pardoned myself that I would have to postpone my *Bukhārī* class, Ḥaḍrat occasionally said [and when I remember his words, it brings tears to my eyes] "You can teach *Bukhārī* any time you want, but we are not going to be here forever."

When Ḥaḍrat's sickness became worse and he settled in Bahit so his personal physician could visit him as needed, Ḥaḍrat's love led me to my habit of leaving straight for the bus station from the school after teaching *Abū Dāwūd* [which was in the second hour of the afternoon].

82 'Academic work' should not mistaken as purely academic but rather that Ḥaḍrat was writing a commentary of the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Imam Mālik, which was a work of *Dīn* and a major service to Islam.

If the bus was ready, I prayed my ʿAṣr in Bahit, but if it arrived late, I prayed ʿAṣr in the bus station masjid and then boarded the bus. The bus conductor got to know me well since I went everyday. If I came late, they [the conductor and driver] waited a couple of minutes. When I reached Bahit, I prayed my ṣalāt and met Ḥaḍrat. By the grace of Allah سبحانه وتعالى after some time, Allah سبحانه وتعالى put something in the hearts of the bus people, that they would speed past Bahit, drop me off in front of Ḥaḍrat's residence [the Kāngrū villa], and u-turn back to the bus station in Bahit to drop off the passengers. The drivers were both Muslim and non-Muslim [Sikh]. When the passengers complained that the driver had passed Bahit and yelled, "We want to get off in Bahit, We want to get off in Bahit", the driver feigned ignorance as if he never heard them. After dropping me off, they would say, "A second or two won't make a difference. This Shaikh has to walk a mile and a half on foot." I would spend the night at Ḥaḍrat's and depart early in the morning after tea on the first bus to Sahāranpūr. These reminiscences now bring tears to my eyes.

Anyhow, back to the discussion about Ramadan.

I spent two and a half Ramadan's with Ḥaḍrat. The first was in 1379/ 1960 when Ḥaḍrat spent his Ramadan in Bahit house.

Zakariyyā[83] recites his part, then arrives at Bahit house and prays his tarāwīḥ with Ḥaḍrat, then returns in the morning. The illuminations and blessings of this Ramadan are unfathomable. I will always remember one incident. A place was made for me in the corner of Ḥaḍrat's private room. Brother Alṭāf [may Allah سبحانه وتعالى bless him] had put curtains around my place [as is common in the masjids for the people sitting in iʿtikāf], and made it cozy with a comfortable bed, cushions and pillows. I quietly slipped behind the curtain and sat on my bed and in Ḥaḍrat's presence after ʿAṣr. Ḥaḍrat was mostly unaware of my presence [in the room]. Once, I came in as usual. Ḥaḍrat was taking medicine in the room and two or three helpers were standing around him. At that time, even

83 Shaikh Zakariyyā habitually refers to himself in the third person.

someone as blind as myself could feel the illuminations descending like rain across the room as if the sun was rising. I thought about this for a long time, in fact, all the way to up to ʿAṣr time.

Some people have so much blessing in their ifṭār*,* you will not see it in the fasting of millions of people. I never felt and saw these illuminations before or after that ever again. Even now, when I think about that time, it fills me with joy. Ḥaḍrat insisted that I inform him when I arrive in the room, but I told all the helpers and others [who wished to inform Ḥaḍrat of my presence] that it would divert Ḥaḍrat's attention. I became friends with my sincere and loving friend, al-Ḥāj Abū al-Ḥasan, this Ramadan. He enjoys narrating the details of these first days of our budding friendship every now and then. I also remember many details of that time but should I begin narrating them, it will easily fill up seven to eight sides. As they are irrelevant to the subject of Ramadan of our elders I will note it down at some other time.

This year, Ḥaḍrat's affection for Shāh Masūd gave him the opportunity to lead tarāwīḥ, who recited beautifully and passionately. He completed the Qur'an on the 25th, and different people led on the remaining four days. Tarāwīḥ began immediately after ʿIshā time came in [in Bahit House] and since Qārī Muẓaffar led in the old school [in Sahāranpūr], I would catch two to four rakʿas behind him once I prayed tarāwīḥ in Bahit house and returned to Sahāranpūr. In those days, I had to have tea after tarāwīḥ and never missed it for anything. Toasted rice was always cooked in the house for after tarāwīḥ and if anything else came in it was also presented at that time. Shaikh al-Ḥāj Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Miāń and Sufi ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, who is Sir Raḥīm Bakhsh's nephew, also spent most of his Ramadan with Ḥaḍrat in Bahit House. It was routine for the devoted helpers to come sit and drink tea with me after praying tarāwīḥ with Ḥaḍrat.

My second Ramadan with Ḥaḍrat was Ḥaḍrat's last Ramadan of 1379/1962. Ḥaḍrat had insisted many months prior to Ramadan that the school and *Bukhārī* will go on, but we will not always be around. So, please come for Ramadan. From that point on, I made it my habit to leave immediately after Jumuʿa [skipping lunch] for Raipūr. I

have written somewhere in *Āp Bītī* that when I went to Raipūr and Niẓām al-Dīn both Ḥaḍrat Raipūrī and Shaikh Ilyās loved me eating with them, so I would stop eating the day before I left. I arrived after Jumu'a, stayed for two days, prayed Fajr in its earliest time with Ḥaḍrat, drank tea and departed early Monday morning for Sahāranpūr. It was decided that I would spend half the blessed month in Sahāranpūr and half in Raipūr. According to this plan, I was to leave for Raipūr on the 15th/19th of February, 1962 until I heard of Shaikh Yūsuf's arrival on the 17th. Instead of leaving on the 15th, I waited for him then departed on the 17th/21st of February, 1962. Shaikh Yūsuf arrived from Dehli on that day. I immediately sat in the car with him and we left for Raipūr and did ifṭār with Ḥaḍrat. Shaikh Yūsuf returned the next day while I prayed my Eid ṣalāt with Ḥaḍrat behind Shāh Mas'ūd and then returned to Sahāranpūr. During that time [between the 17th until the end of Ramadan], I had to leave for Sahāranpūr for two days. I still remember people from Bahit, Rairy [two villages] and various other villages wearing their Eid clothes. They were walking towards the Eid ṣalāt place because ṣalāt in Bāgh [name of village where Shaikh Zakariyyā prayed his Eid with Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir- translator] was early in the morning while Eid was prayed in the other villages at 11 am. This is how I remember the colorful scenes of adults, the elderly and children in glittery clothing, laughing, playing and talking on their way to the Eid ṣalāt place on horse carriages, bull carts and horses.

This Ramadan, Maulwī Faḍl al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-Mannān Dehlawī led tarāwīḥ in the Bāgh Masjid while Maulwī 'Abd al-Mannān led in the room next to Ḥaḍrat's. I also prayed my ṣalāt behind him in the last days of Ramadan since I had already finished my own Qur'an in tarāwīḥ at home.

Ḥaḍrat was diligent about his seclusion after Ẓuhr. None but one or two helpers were allowed in case Ḥaḍrat needed something or help going to the bathroom. Besides them, everyone was forbidden entry. After praying Fajr in its beginning time, Ḥaḍrat rested after he met with the departees. He ate at about 10 a.m. [the physicians insisted Ḥaḍrat not fast because of his condition]. Years of sickness had worn him out; he could not even step up on the footrest and sit on the

latrine without help from others. Since the news had spread that Ḥaḍrat was going to spend Ramadan in Pakistan, the crowd was big. After he ate a little, four people lifted the straw-twine bed outside for Ḥaḍrat and people came upon him from all sides. Zakariyyā was always forced to push people back from the bed.

People were taken in bai'a in large numbers. Every time he came out, people were seen as far as the outer edges of the field. Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Rashīd took everyone in bai'a. In the beginning, Ḥaḍrat recited *bism Allāh* and there was no formal and lengthy wording for the bai'a. After *bism Allāh*, the kalima ṭayyiba was read. Then, repentance was sought for all sins and finally emphasis was laid on importance of praying ṣalāt and adherence to the Sunna. After 'Aṣr, Ḥaḍrat's bed was kept outside until Maghrib. A reading session was routine with Ḥaḍrat for many years at this time [between 'Aṣr and Maghrib-translator] and was kept up throughout Ḥaḍrat's tours of India and Pakistan. This year Āzād read the 'Letters [*maktūbāt*] of Khawāja Muḥammad Ma'ṣūm[84]'. The letters are originally in persian but have been translated by Shaikh Nasīm Aḥmad Farīdī Amrohī into Urdu and have been published in parts in al-Furqān monthly [monthly magazine founded by Shaikh Manẓūr Nau'mānī-translator]. Since the gathering was big, ifṭār was held in different places, e.g. in the masjid and the school. Ḥaḍrat's closest companions broke their fast by Ḥaḍrat's bed and then Ḥaḍrat prayed his Maghrib with this group in the courtyard. Everyone else prayed their ṣalāt in the masjid. Approximately half an hour after ṣalāt, dinner was laid out in different areas [due to the numbers in the crowd] followed by tea.

It was my routine from 1338/1920 to eat only dates and Zamzam in ifṭār whereas my real ifṭār was after 'Ishā.

Shaikh 'Alī Miāń writes in Ḥaḍrat's biography under the section, 'The Ramadan of Raipūr':

There was a certain liveliness to Ramadan in Raipūr. People prepared in advance and awaited the arrival of the blessed month of Ra-

84 Son of Mujjaddi Alf-e-Thānī [Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī].

madan. Workers and laborers took breaks, the teachers of the schools also took this opportunity to join Ḥaḍrat, and a large number of scholars and ḥuffāẓ also came at this time. Before the partition, most of the devotees, helpers and scholars came from East Punjab. The devotees of Raipūr and surrounding areas took the responsibility of caring for the ifṭār, seḥr, and dinner of the guests and people in i'tikāf. In Ramadan, all gatherings [that were held throughout the year-translator] were cancelled in respect for Ḥaḍrat's wishes [who was strict about seclusion in the month of Ramadan -translator] and discussion time and appointments [with Ḥaḍrat] were also cancelled. All mail was also terminated. Ḥaḍrat remained by himself throughout a 24 hour period except in ṣalāt times. Ḥaḍrat became irritated if somebody came with whom he was forced to meet. Before his illness, he did ifṭār with the gathering with dates and Zamzam. Immediately after Maghrib, before his sickness became worse, he ate dinner then drank tea with the gathering until the adhān of 'Ishā. This was the only time of sitting with Ḥaḍrat in 24 hours. After adhān, people prepared for ṣalāt. During this time, a large group of scholars sitting in the first row asked Ḥaḍrat important questions and then Ḥaḍrat responded. After that, he either rested or sat up and the helpers massaged him. Tarāwīḥ was held in the masjid and khanqā. The Qur'an was recited and completed in both places. Many ḥuffāẓ were present but Ḥaḍrat preferred those who recited beautifully and who knew Qur'an well.

Ḥaḍrat spent one Ramadan [Ramadan of 1372 hijri/1953] in Manṣūrī. There were approximately fifty to sixty volunteers and Maulwī 'Abd al-Mannān led the tarāwīḥ. Ḥaḍrat's routine was to hold a gathering after tarāwīḥ. At this time Ḥaḍrat was in a lively mood and in good spirits. Many people stayed awake the whole night. In essence, night or day, there was a feeling of liveliness in the area.

Shaikh 'Alī Miāń came from Lucknow on the 16th [Saturday, May 29, 1953] straight to Manṣūrī and left after Eid.

In another place, Shaikh 'Alī Miāń writes about Ḥaḍrat's last Ramadan,

THE LAST RAMADAN AND LAST JOURNEY TO PAKISTAN

Ḥaḍrat's Ramadan of 1381/ February, 1962 was spent in Raipūr also. Upon Ḥaḍrat's insistence, Shaikh [Shaikh Zakariyyā] made it his habit to leave for Raipūr immediately after Jumu'a in Sahāranpūr and return Monday morning. As it was difficult to commute each week back and forth between Raipūr and Sahāranpūr, it was decided that half of Ramadan be spent in Sahāranpūr and half in Raipūr. Ḥaḍrat Shaikh al-Ḥadīth arrived in Raipūr on the 17th of Ramadan/ February 21, 1962. Tarāwīḥ was led by Shaikh 'Abd al-Mannān's son Shaikh Ḥāfiẓ Faḍl al-Raḥmān. Shaikh 'Abd al- Ḥafīẓ Gamthalwī had also arrived before Ramadan. How was anybody to know that this was going to be Ḥaḍrat's last Ramadan and the time to depart from this world was arriving closer and closer. The reading session of Khawāja Ma'ṣūm's letters was held from 'Aṣr to shortly before Maghrib. The number of guests was big and was getting bigger each day. Ḥaḍrat prayed Eid ṣalāt behind Shāh Mas'ūd. The most stirring spectacle was when they took Ḥaḍrat in the wheelchair to his shaikh's [Shāh 'Abd al-Raḥīm Raipūrī] grave after Eid. It said,

أَنْتُمْ لَنَا سَلَفٌ وَنَحْنُ لَكُمْ خَلَفٌ وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ

You are our predecessors [salaf], we are your successors [khalaf] and we shall certainly meet you soon, Allah ﷻ willing

In another place, Shaikh 'Alī Miāń writes:

Ramadan came upon him during his stay in Pakistan also. His helpers and devotees from Pakistan hoped Ḥaḍrat would spend Ramadan with them in Pakistan so that their Ramadan would be illuminated with blessings [Ramadan arrived in the summer in those days]. In 1371/1951, Ḥaḍrat spent his Ramadan in Kauhi Marī at Sufi 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's residence. In 1373/1953, he spent his Ramadan in Ghaura Gallī [Kauhi Marī] on the sincere invitation and request of Muḥammad Shafī' Qureshi and Malik Muḥammad Dīn. There were more than a hundred guests that year. They [Muḥammad Shafī' Qureshi and Malik Muḥammad Dīn] both dedicated their time and

effort in caring for the guests. The next year in 1374/1954, Ḥaḍrat spent his Ramadan in Ghaura Gallī again. The year after in 1375/1955 he spent Ramadan in Faisalabad. There were approximately 200 people this year. In 1376/1956, Ḥaḍrat spent his Ramadan in Lahore. Chaudhry 'Abd al-Ḥamīd [commissioner of rehabilitation] was the host this Ramadan. In 1378/1958, Ḥaḍrat once again spent his Ramadan in Faisalabad. This was to be Ḥaḍrat's last Ramadan in Pakistan, the last two Ramadan's of 1380 and 1381/1961 and 1962 both being spent in Raipūr, India.[85]

As mentioned above, Ḥaḍrat spent the Ramadan of 1372/ May, 1953 in Manṣūrī. The year 1377/1958 has been left out by 'Alī Miāń. That year was also spent in Lahore in Sufi 'Abd al- Ḥamīd's residence. In his book, Shaikh 'Alī Miāń wrote that Ḥaḍrat spent the Ramadan of 1378/1959 in Faisalabad. Shaikh 'Alī Miāń took this information from my diary but in reality, either my transcriber or Shaikh 'Alī Miāń's transcriber has made a mistake because the Ramadan of 1378/1959 was actually spent in Sahāranpūr in Bahit House while the Ramadan of 1379/ February 27, 1960 was in Faisalabad.

DEVOTIONS OF SHAIKH MUḤAMMAD YAḤYĀ KĀNDHELWĪ[86]

Recitation of Qur'an was my father's life; he could not do without it. Maybe I have written somewhere that he was a bookseller and packaged the books and noted down the addresses himself. As he worked, he recited the Qur'an loudly without confusing any aya or making any mistake.

85 Sawāniḥ-e-Ḥaḍrat Raipurī.

86 Maulānā Muḥammad Yaḥyā Kāndhelwī (1871-1917) was Shaikh Zakariyyā's father. He was appointed by his shaikh, Shaikh Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, to teach the books of hadith after he [Shaikh Khalīl Aḥmad] left to settle down in Ḥijāz. Throughout his life he taught hadith without pay and recited one Qur'an daily for six months after he memorized Qur'an at the age of seven [approximately 464 Qur'an]. He possessed the rare ability of being able to recite Qura'n while doing any work without stumbling in his recitation.

Shaikh ʿAshiq Ilāhī writes in *Tadhkirat al-Khalīl*:

Once at my request he came to Mīrat to recite the Qur'an in tarāwīḥ. I saw that whatever he was doing throughout the day he was reciting the Qur'an simultaneously and in this manner completed one Qur'an daily. When the time of ifṭār came, you heard him reciting the last Sura, Sūrat al-Nās. When he stepped off the train it was ʿIshā time. It was his habit to be in the state of ablution all the time. When he entered the masjid, he walked straight to the place where the imam led, recited ten part in three hours smoothly and without any mistakes, without stumbling or any confusion between two assimilated ayas, as if he was reciting from the Qur'an clearly and calmly. He finished on the third day and returned to Sahāranpūr. There was no need for a listener or to recite it with anyone else.

Another thing my father mentioned about this journey was that some of the people of Mīrat told him that when people learned a ḥāfiẓ is arriving from Sahāranpūr to finish the Qur'an in three days, thirty to forty ḥuffāẓ stood behind him in tarāwīḥ to test him.

My father never caught a 'fever' like myself in the month of Ramadan. He went whenever his friends insisted, completed the Qur'an in two or three days in tarāwīḥ and returned to Sahāranpūr. Once, he went on the request of Shāh Zāhid Ḥussain, the mayor of Bahit, led tarāwīḥ in his house, and completed the Qur'an in two days. I also remember him going to the Nawāb Walī Masjid in Qisābpūra, Dehli for tarāwīḥ. Once, Maulwī Naṣīr al-Dīn was leading tarāwīḥ in Ḥakīm ʿIshāq's masjid when my father walked in [he had just returned from a long journey]. Naṣīr al-Dīn was on the 14th part and the listener was correcting him repeatedly. In the state of ablution, he walked into the masjid, asked Naṣīr al-Dīn to move from the imam's place and completed 16 part in 16 rakʿas. The prayers in the back were certainly exhausted and irritated but their joy over the completion of Qur'an did away with everything. They all forgot they were exhausted when they realized the Qur'an was completed on the 12th of Ramadan.

I also remember when some relatives insisted that my father come to Kāndhla and lead them in tarāwīḥ. He came down to Kāndhla and completed one Qur'an in Ummī Bī's [my father's maternal grandmother and Shaikh Muẓaffar Ḥussain's[87] daughter. Her name was Amat al-Raḥmān but she was better known by her nickname Ummī Bī] house. These were the last few years of my father's life. My father told me of how in his youth he spent the whole night in voluntary ṣalāt. And since more than four people could not stand behind in ṣalāt in Kāndhla, the womenfolk alternated in the voluntary ṣalāt while my father continued to recite the Qur'an. My uncle also spent Ramadan in Kāndhla for Ummī Bī and spent the whole night in tarāwīḥ. After praying his obligatory ṣalāt in the masjid, he left for the house and completed 15 or 16 part by seḥr. The story of Shaikh Ra'ūf al-Ḥasan [my father's maternal uncle and my late wife's father] is narrated in detail in *Āp Bītī* [part 6] under the chapter of taqwā. I narrate one portion of this chapter below:

On the 20th of Ramadan [March 17], he recited from Sūrat al-Baqara to Sūrat al-Nās in one rak'a. After completing the second rak'a with Sūrat al-Nās at seḥr, he turned around and said to his mother, Ummī Bī, "I have recited two rak'as you can complete the rest ([18 rak'as]." His mother, Ummī Bī, stood the whole time he recited the Qur'an in one rak'a. One story leads to another and it seems as though I am on a tangent but as these stories relate to the subject of the devotions of our elders in the month of Ramadan, they are not completely irrelevant either.

My father didn't have any set routine for Ramadan. I narrated several incidents and stories in different places in *Āp Bītī*. During his stay in Gangoh until 1328/1910, I don't ever remember my father ever travelling during the month of Ramadan. I may have also mentioned somewhere previously that in the last Ramadan of Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī in 1322/1903, Shaikh Gangohī

87 A great shaikh known for his taqwā. He could not eat unlawfully gained food and would vomit it out immediately. For this reason, people were careful about inviting him lest it be revealed that they eat from unlawful sources.

asked my father to lead tarāwīḥ. My father said that, "From the age of seven I had never needed to open a Qur'an until the 29th of Sha'bān/ November, 1903 of that year due to fear of my shaikh [Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī]. Once my fear had passed after the first day of tarāwīḥ, I was fine."

I have written repeatedly that my father was always busy reciting Qur'an. He was busy in his book shop, taking books out, packaging them, and writing addresses etc. all the while reciting the Qur'an loudly.

During his stay in Sahāranpūr, he spent every Ramadan there except for one Ramadan [I don't remember where he was at the time]. In 1332/1914, when the masjid of Dār al-Ṭalaba was ready, my father led the first tarāwīḥ on the request of my Shaikh [Shaikh Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī]. My father's devotions in Sahāranpūr were as follows:

Aside from the time he was teaching at the school, my father spent most of his time, including ifṭār, in the Mauchī Walī Masjid [adjacent to Ḥakīm Ya'qūb's house]. He opened his ifṭār with whatever was present, though he preferred dates and Zamzam. Dates and Zamzam were a necessary part of my shaikh, Shaikh Sahāranpūrī's ifṭār. If the hajjis brought dates and Zamzam for my Shaikh, they were immediately preserved in boxes and bottles [Zamzam and dates were not as common then as they are today due to the ease of modern transportation].

My father prayed short voluntary ṣalāt after Maghrib and ate very little. He ate alone or occasionally with one or two friends, as eating with people usually takes up more time [which he disliked]. He then lay down and quietly recited the same part he recited in tarāwīḥ [aside from the Qur'an he recited throughout the day]. This is the only time I saw him reciting the tarāwīḥ part. After tarāwīḥ, which was not in any particular place [as mentioned previously] he returned home and rested for a short while. My father always suffered from insomnia. He recited Qur'an until he fell asleep. He ate seḥr [which did not consist of anything in particular e.g. milk and tea] in the very last minutes and ate whatever was cooked.

Since Kāndhla tradition was buttered chappati with meatballs at seḥr*,* this was what he ate most often.

I don't remember whether it has already been mentioned in *Āp Bītī* or not that one of the customs our elders [paternal family] in Kāndhla upheld was that one big pot of pilaf was cooked after ʿAṣr which was made ready shortly before Maghrib. Once it was prepared, people brought small pots and filled up however much they needed. The pot was then placed on the courtyard of the family house where the elders gathered out in the open field for ifṭār. If anyone was passing by on the road they called him to join in. There was no such thing as an ifṭār; they ate pilaf to their full and prayed Maghrib in the nearby masjid, then prayed voluntary ṣalāt from Maghrib to ʿIshā.

It has also been mentioned in *Āp Bītī* that in the time of our elders, no one in both rows of our masjid was a non-ḥāfiẓ except the caller of adhān, who was a native of some far off place and had no family or friends. He was found begging in Kāndhla. The elders advised him that "It would be better for you to stay in the masjid, call the adhān and take care of the masjid; you will be given food twice a day and clothes to wear." He was accomodated in the masjid and stayed the caller until he died at the age of eighty. The elders sometimes said to him, "Oh Mullā! If it weren't for you everyone here would be a ḥāfiẓ." The elders continued with their voluntary ṣalāt and aurād (uttered devotions) until shortly before ʿIshā. They then left for their homes [which were in the neighborhood] of the masjid, attended to their personal needs, performed ablution and returned once again to the masjid. Everyone prayed ʿIshā in the masjid, and then the youth went home and lead voluntary ṣalāt until seḥr. The womenfolk alternated, since more than three prayers behind the imam were not allowed at one time. The ḥuffāẓ also alternated. They made rounds in the different homes; one would go to such and such relative, lead them in four rakʿas then take off to another relative's home. This routine continued until seḥr. Then, at seḥr everyone arrived back at their homes and ate with their families.

As mentioned previously, buttered chappati and meatballs were custom and the third important dish was *malīda* [bread broken into small pieces and prepared with sugar and oil]. The common belief was that *malīda* digests slowly and therefore prevented one from getting hungry while fasting.

After adhān, Fajr was prayed at its beginning time and then everyone went to sleep. Then some woke early while others later. Whenever they woke they recited from the Qur'an until shortly before ifṭār. Some recited the whole Qur'an while others repeated the same part for tarāwīḥ. I have written in many places in *Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān* that of all the women of our family, my own daughters [May Allah ﷻ increase them in strength and making effort for the sake of Allah ﷻ] recited at least 15 or 16 part throughout the day and spent the whole night behind various ḥuffāẓ, despite being occupied the whole day in the kitchen and taking care of their children [they each have more than two children]. They competed over who completed more. I have also written somewhere that my paternal grandmother was also a ḥāfiẓ*a*. Her routine was to complete the Qur'an in seven days according to the *manzil*.[88] But in Ramadan, she completed forty parts every day i.e. one Qur'an plus ten extra parts; and this was her routine throughout her life. In addition to this, she recited various tasbīḥs hundreds of times each that amounted to approximately seventeen thousand altogether. The details of her routine of tasbīḥ can be found in *Tadhkirat al-Khalīl*.

And my father's maternal grandmother's incident is mentioned previously relating her listening to the whole Qur'an from her son Shaikh Ra'ūf al-Ḥasan in one rak'a. I am grateful to Allah ﷻ that this tradition [of reciting many part of Qur'an] continues to this day in the women of our home. They get little sleep in the night

88 The *manzil* is a seven-day plan the Companions ﷡ followed to recite Qura'n. It is as follows: 1. Fātiḥa to Nisā 2. Mā'ida to Tauba 3. Yūnus to Banī Isrāīl 4. Maryam to Furqān 5. Shūrā to Yāsīn 6. Ṣaffāt to Qāf 7. Dhāriyāt to al-Nās [Ibn Māja].

and day because they spend the night reciting and listening to the Qur'an when the children are sleeping and when they want to sleep during the day, one child is crying from one side while another is pulling from another. Sometimes, I feel so much pity for them. May Allah ﷻ accept them all.

In *Mashāikh-e-Kāndhla,* it is mentioned that it was Shaikh Muẓaffar Ḥussain's routine to spend the whole night in worship, and that he did not sleep for a second or take a short rest on the bed. He cried the whole night for fear of the Hereafter.

All this was mentioned tangentially. My father preferred to pray ṣalāt in its beginning time, but since Fajr was prayed near sunrise everywhere in Sahāranpūr, he prayed at that time also. In the time of my shaikh [Ḥaḍrat Sahāranpūrī] Fajr was prayed when the sun was about to rise throughout the year and in Ramadan ten to fifteen minutes before that. It was my father's routine to rest after Fajr. After two to three hours of sleep, he went to teach in the school. He also tutored lessons to certain students who stayed in the school in Ramadan and were close to my father and continued this until ifṭār. He never recited the Qur'an to or with anyone throughout the day. If he had any free time during the day, he recited Qur'an loudly.

It has also been mentioned previously that while in Gangoh, he called out the adhān himself. His habit was to say it loudly and to prolong it as much as possible. He often said, "The reason I always called out the adhān was so people could have time to eat their ifṭār and arrive in time for ṣalāt and so that the adhān reaches as far as possible. In my adhān, a person can easily eat ifṭār, walk from home and get the opening takbīr behind *Quṭb-e-'Ālam* (Pole of the Universe) [Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī]."

Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī periodically synced his watch with the sun [as it reached its zenith]. My father would say, "I would get on the roof of the khanqā shortly before Maghrib, break off some grass, chew them for ifṭār and then call out a long adhān, slow and easy." The incidents about my father's Ramadan in Mīrat, Nawāb Walī Masjid, Dehli and Bahit have already been mentioned.

In *Mashāikh-e-Kāndhla* it says:

It was the routine of Shaikh Yaḥyā to lead his mother and maternal grandmother in ṣalāt every Ramadan in Kāndhla, complete the Qur'an in three days, then return to Sahāranpūr. The year he passed away in Dhu al-Qa'da, he completed the Qur'an in one night and returned the next day.

I have written about my father in various places in *Āp Bītī,* though I cannot remember anything at this time. I also mentioned in the beginning of this booklet of Shaikh Gangohī's practice of reciting Qur'an loudly, both inside and outside of ṣalāt. Sometimes, I was deep asleep and was woken up by the sound of his crying.

Amongst my elders, I found two who cried copiously, one Shaikh al-Islām Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī and the second, my father. I have written in *Āp Bītī* that I accompanied Shaikh al-Islām Madanī on his trips around the Sahāranpūr area. His trips were like storms. He would arrive, for example, at 4 p.m., pick me up in his car, and rush off to Rairy or Dahlapara for a convention and drop me off that night or early next morning in Sahāranpūr. Once, I went with him to Ābha. Ḥaḍrat Shaikh al-Islām told the people to put my bed next to his in his room. At that time many of Ḥaḍrat's helpers were with him. It was extremely cold outside and the helpers had their beds in another room. The elders of Ābha had old connections with *Shaikhain* [Shaikh Qāsim Nānautwī and Shaikh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī- the elders and founders of Deoband] and after them with the four great Shaikhs [Shaikh Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, Shaikh al-Hind Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, Shāh 'Abd al-Raḥīm Raipūrī, and Shaikh Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī]. Because of their connections, they were unreserved with Ḥaḍrat Shaikh al-Islām. One of them asked him,

"Why is it that his bed is put here while all the helpers are in another room?" Before Ḥaḍrat could say anything, I spoke up, "I will tell you why. The fact is that your being with Ḥaḍrat will disturb him while I am like a goat tied by his door." And this was true because whenever I went to Ḥaḍrat Raipūrī, Shaikh al-Islām, my uncle [Shaikh Ilyās], and Ḥaḍrat 'Āshiq Ilāhī Mīrati, they

would tell the people in charge to prepare my bed next to theirs. I always slept close by my father anyhow. I never saw anyone cry and sob the way they [Shaikh Yaḥyā and Shaikh al-Islām] did, like a child when he gets a beating. Ḥaḍrat Shaikh al-Islām even recited Hindi couplets when he cried. I have also heard that once the the doors of Ḥaḍrat Shaikh Gangohī's room were shut after Ẓuhr, the sound of his crying and sobbing could be heard from the courtyard.

DEVOTIONS OF SHAIKH MUḤAMMAD ILYĀS

I have narrated many stories of my uncle, Shaikh Muḥammad Ilyās, in different chapters of *Āp Bītī*, but presently the subject is Ramadan. My uncle's routine in Ramadan, as preserved in the narrations of Kāndhla, was that he ate whatever was available at the time of ifṭār. Tea, though, was necessary. He ate little and his food was not *like your father's*. I suddenly remembered this wording of the hadith from *Abū Dāwūd*. It is narrated in *Abū Dāwūd* that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, that if the food is brought at the time when the congregation is about to stand for 'Ishā, then one should eat first. The commentary of this hadith and other such matters are for the commentaries, I just mentioned it because it suddenly came to mind. Once, someone asked Ibn 'Umar ؓ, "We have heard that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said if the food is brought when the congregation for 'Ishā is about to stand, then one should eat first." He couldn't believe that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would say such a thing because if the person went to eat he is going to miss his ṣalāt. Ibn 'Umar ؓ responded, "*Woe to you, do you think their dinner was like your father's?"*[89] In other words, they didn't have a variety of dishes and long mats like your father, all they had was two or three dates and one or two bowls of barley. This was exactly what my uncle's dinner was like. He ate one or half a chappati only. Anyhow, after ifṭār he prayed Maghrib. After Maghrib, he prayed voluntary ṣalāt, which was extremely long [a habit he had acquired from

89 Abū Dāwūd, *idhā Ḥaḍarat al-Ṣalāt wa al-'Ashā*.

childhood]. In the month of Ramadan, his voluntary ṣalāt finished shortly before the adhān of ʻIshā. Once he finished the voluntary ṣalāt he laid down for a little while and then the helpers massaged him. After he rested for ½ hour, it would be time for ʻIshā. He led tarāwīḥ himself and layed down immediately after. There was no gathering or discussion of any kind at this time. He said many times, "After saying the *salām* of witr, I fall asleep before my head touches the pillow."

I have a ravenous appetite so when I came to meet him in the blessed month, I had to have my ifṭār immediately after tarāwīḥ. There had to be *phulkiāń* in the ifṭār and if some friends brought any fruits or anything else, we ate that at this time. In that time, my uncle sat with us for a little while, but I insisted that he leave [for his comfort]. Despite that, he still sat for 15 to 20 minutes. It was routine for him to wake up at 12 a.m. By the time he had tended to his personal needs and performed ablution the helpers boiled two eggs and gave them to him once he came out. When he ate them, he stood for tahajjud and continued praying until shortly before seḥr, at which time he would partake of seḥr. It was typical of my uncle and I have seen it numerous times: with a morsel of food in his right hand, he would tell one of the helpers to bring him water and the other to go and call the adhān. He would finish the morsel and the glass of water a second before the caller started the adhān.

And I may have written the caprifig[90] story numerous times, which is that one of our relatives was an imam in Dehli. He thought that since Shaikh Ilyās was the shaikh of Dehli, he must get a lot of good food sent to him during the month of Ramadan. He came to Shaikh Ilyās to spend the night at his place. At ifṭār time, Ḥaḍrat asked,

"Is there anything to eat?" People said,

"Only the caprifigs from last night Ḥaḍrat." He replied,

"Great, bring them." The caprifigs became the ifṭār and dinner after Maghrib. Ḥaḍrat asked in seḥr, "Is there anything?" People said,

90 A type of wild fig.

"Only the caprifigs from last time." Ḥaḍrat took four five caprifigs and that was his seḥr. The whole story is mentioned in *Āp Bītī*.[91]

After the adhān of Fajr, he prayed Fajr in its earliest time. He never delivered any talk after Fajr in Ramadan [that began in Maulwī Yūsuf's time]. After ṣalāt, he sat on his prayer rug until after sunrise and read his aurād. The helpers prayed their ṣalāt then rested [they woke up at their own times]. Ḥaḍrat sat until after sunrise and only

91 The whole story is reproduced from *Āp Bītī*. Ḥaḍrat writes,

The incident I am narrating didn't happen in my presence, but was narrated to me on many occasions by my relative who was an imam of a masjid in Dehli. It was Ḥaḍrat's first years [i.e. the work of tablīgh had not yet began]. He thought Ḥaḍrat is the shaikh of Dehli and must get sent a lot of good food in Ramadan. He arrived in Niẓām al-Dīn near 'Aṣr time. Ḥaḍrat's routine after 'Aṣr to Maghrib was to do dhikr loudly. At ifṭār, he'd ask the helpers if anything was available. The helpers brought out whatever they had and that became his ifṭār and dinner. Anyhow, when the time of ifṭār came, and Ḥaḍrat asked the usual question, "Is there anything?" The helpers said, "Ḥaḍrat, nothing besides the caprifigs from yesterday." My uncle was ecstatic. He said, "Great, excellent, bring them in." My relative also sat and ate with Ḥaḍrat. My uncle ate four five caprifigs, drank some water, and was grateful to Allah ﷻ. He led the Maghrib and then started the voluntary ṣalāt. He rested for a short while shortly before the adhān of 'Ishā'. He then led 'Ishā' and then tarāwīḥ slowly and calmly. My poor relative kept on wondering when the food was going to come in. The students of Niẓām al-Dīn prepared their own food but were distributed one or two chappatis per person. They would place these on their hands and eat them.

My uncle was fine as usual but my relative had a difficult time passing that night. At seḥr, it was the same situation as in ifṭār, the same routine repeated over again: the caprifigs, the water and then expressing gratitude to Allah ﷻ. At Fajr, he asked permission to return to Dehli but my uncle laughed and did not grant him permission. He started explaining all the errands he had to run and so on and so forth but Ḥaḍrat refused. The whole day, my poor relative had spent seḥr and ifṭār eating caprifigs. He often said afterwards, "Only I know what I was going through at that time." The second day after 'Aṣr, Ḥaḍrat, as was his routine, was busy in loud dhikr while my relative was dreading the sight of caprifigs for ifṭār again. Shortly before Maghrib, a big pot of chicken baryani was brought on a cart and the whole masjid was filled with its fragrance. My uncle said in ifṭār, "Come Brother Laṭīf! This baryani came especially for you. He said, "I savored the taste of that baryani on the second day for ifṭār and seḥr and will remember it for the rest of my life."

left after praying his post-sunrise ṣalāt. After that, if he felt tired and had time he rested for a little while, otherwise, he gave a talk to the people of Miwāt and spent time with the guests who came to meet him [guests came in constantly and Ḥaḍrat often left his routine to sit with them].

Ḥaḍrat was extremely precautious about the descendants of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. He was very respectful of them, overlooking the mistakes of his students or murīds if they were from the family of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, and he stressed this upon me also. Once, I complained about one of Ḥaḍrat's students who was also his murīd and helper. He said, "I know about him but he is from the family." He said the word *syed* [a person from the lineage of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ] with such reverence that I myself became overwhelmed and stayed quiet.

Shaikh 'Alī Miāń, in his biography "Shaikh Ilyās and His Work of Dīn" writes,Shaikh Mu'īn Allāh narrates:

"I was sick one Ramadan. One time, the boy who brought food for me passed by Ḥaḍrat as he was about to start his voluntary ṣalāt. Ḥaḍrat said, 'Put the food down, I will take it.' The boy didn't understand and took up the food to the room. After ṣalāt, Ḥaḍrat came up and said, "I told the boy, I would bring the food up but he still took it himself." He then sat by me, talked with me and raised my spirits."Much of this has to do with the fact that Shaikh Mu'īn Allāh was syed.

Ḥaḍrat also slept in the afternoon for one or two hours. After Ẓuhr, Ḥaḍrat came to his room and met with guests until 'Aṣr. If any student had a lesson with him in Ramadan, it would be during this time.

After 'Aṣr until Maghrib, Ḥaḍrat did dhikr loudly. In the other months, Ḥaḍrat did his dhikr from before tahajjud until the time of Fajr, which was prayed shortly before sunrise. I saw that amongst my elders, none was more constant on doing dhikr loudly than my uncle. Some years before his sickness, he did his twelve tasbīḥ and the dhikr of *Allah* ﷻ*, Allah* ﷻ in the last part of the night in other months and from 'Aṣr to Maghrib in Ramadan without fail.

My uncle departed for his third hajj in the first days of Ramaḍān. ʻAlī Miāń writes in the biography, "He went for hajj the third time in 1351/1933. The moon was sighted in Niẓām al-Dīn. Ḥaḍrat prayed his first tarāwīḥ in Delhi railway station and boarded the train to Karachi after tarāwīḥ."

I was also there to see my uncle off. After stowing his luggage on the train, my uncle led tarāwīḥ in the station. In addition to those who came to see Ḥaḍrat off, many of the locals from Dehli also stood behind Ḥaḍrat in tarāwīḥ. Some people prayed tarāwīḥ in their masjids, then joined Ḥaḍrat, since tarāwīḥ started early in the masjids while Ḥaḍrat started late because he was busy putting his luggage on the train. He started with Sūrat al-Baqara and recited calmly as if he was leading in his own masjid. The train was late because of which the departure time was delayed for an hour and fifteen minutes.

My uncle always raised the subject of tablīgh much like Shaikh Yūsuf [even now, thousands of people are witness to this]. It was his habit regardless of what he was doing, whether he was eating, drinking or wherever he was, on the train or at the railway station, he was always talking about tablīgh.

Muḥammad Thānī writes in *Sawāniḥ-e-Yūsufī* [Biography of Shaikh Yūsuf], that Ḥaḍrat was very particular about the month of Ramadan. Many tablīgh groups came in from Mewāt to the center of tablīgh, Niẓām al-Dīn, while many others were dispatched to different places; local tablīgh work was also stepped up.❖

وآخر دعوانا الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام علي
سيد المرسلين و خاتم النبيين و حبيب رب العالمين و علي اله و
اصحابه و اتباعه اجمعين برحمتك يا ارحم الراحمين

And our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds, and may His eternal peace and blessings be upon the Master of the Messengers, the Seal of the Prophets, the Beloved to the Lord of the Worlds, Muḥammad ﷺ, and upon his family and companions, and all those who followed him, with your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful.

How should we spend the blessed month of Ramadan?

The blessed month of Ramadan is a special gift from Allah ﷻ. It is an opportunity for any Muslim who makes the most of their time in this blessed month to become a beloved, close servant of Allah ﷻ. Yet many of us are confounded as to how to derive the most spiritual benefit from this blessed month. Ramadan is more than tarāwīḥ, recitation of Qur'an, and fasting. It is a time to gain closeness with Allah ﷻ and to remove the accumulated effects of sins, bad environments, and our *ghafla* (forgetfulness of Allah ﷻ) throughout the year. It provides a beautiful spiritual curriculum for gaining closeness with Allah ﷻ by retreating into the house of Allah ﷻ, breaking our ties and connections with the world, and spending our time in meditation and devotions.

This book presents the example of how one of the greatest ḥadīth scholars of the past century, Shaikh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā, and other notable scholars, left their religious duties of teaching Qur'an and ḥadīth to devote their time in austere devotion and worship of Allah ﷻ in the blessed month. Despite his busy schedule and scholarly work of ḥadīth, Shaikh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā devoted the whole month of Ramadan to connect those who came to sit in his pious company with Allah ﷻ and to ignite the flame of love of Allah ﷻ, love for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, and perpetual remembrance of Allah ﷻ in their lives.

This book is an excellent firsthand account of how the great scholars of Islam utilized each moment of this blessed month. It is an inspirational and motivational book which will, *inshallah*, change the way we view and utilize the blessed month of Ramadan.

Shaikh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā, was born in 1897 in Kāndhla, U.P., India. He was privately tutored by his father, Shaikh Yaḥyā, in the Islamic sciences and completed the six books of ḥadīth with him. He dedicated his life to the teaching, compilation, and commentary of ḥadīth. He worked under his shaikh, Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, to complete the eighteen volume commentary of *Abū Dāwūd* and later himself wrote the monumental twenty-three volume commentary of *Muwaṭṭa' Imām Mālik* over a span of thirty years. His other famous books are *Faḍā'il-e-A'māl, Khaṣā'il-e-Nabawī* [commentary of *Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī*], and *al-Abwāb wa al-Tarājum* [explanation of the chapters of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*]. He began teaching the Islamic sciences at the age of twenty and taught ḥadīth for forty-six years.

He remained in the company of his shaikh, the ḥadīth scholar, Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, for seventeen years until his shaikh's death in 1927. He was granted successorship [*khilāfa*] in 1925 and passed away in 1982.

The author, Dr. Mohammad Ismail Memon Madani is one of the most distinguished *khulafa* of Shaikh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā. He founded Darul-Uloom Al-Madania in Buffalo, New York in 1992 and is now settled in Canada.

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